

Guru Gobind Singh Bhawan, is a monumental building of Punjabi University, Patiala which comprises five sections for the study of different religions. All the sections are united at the top giving the message of unity in diversity. This symbolic structure of the university was a joint vision of S. Kirpal Singh Narang, the then Vice-chancellor, and Professor Harbans Singh. At present the building houses the Department of Religious Studies and the Department of Encyclopaedia of Sikhism.

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GRACIOUS BOOKS

Professor Harbans Singh: A legend in Sikh Studies

Edited by Paramvir Singh

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by

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Punjabi University, Patiala

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Preface

Professor Harbans Singh, the scholar and man, became such a great legendary figure during his lifetime that it is virtually impossible to contain his persona in one write-up or even in a book. He has been known as much for the high niche he achieved in the halls of learning by dint of his careful and accurate scholarship as for his polished and gentlemanly ways in personal life. His profound scholarship and deep insight won him bouquets, as the articles and reviews included in the book reveal, from a wide variety of critics and his mastery over English diction and style remain the envy of any academic even today. He himself preferred to live a low profile life and successfully resisted the lure of higher assignments in preference to his commitment to scholarship which was so total and selfless that he was held in high esteem by academics and activists, politicians and public men.

Although two festschrifts in his honour came out during his lifetime – one edited by Harjinder Singh Dilgeer and the other by Dharam Singh, but neither any research work on any of the aspects of his contribution to Sikh studies nor any biographical work has come thereafter. It has been a matter of pleasure for all admirers of Professor Harbans Singh that this effort of Dr Paramvir Singh has borne fruit. As we can well imagine, the preparation of this book might have involved long and diligent labour searching the libraries for relevant old journals, newspapers and books and then browsing through them all to make the required selections. Dr Paramvir Singh was kind enough to share with me, from time to time, the progress on this project and I feel privileged to be a part of it.

I realize that it is difficult to exactly comprehend and communicate in a small book like this the true personality and vision of a man of the stature of Harbans Singh but Dr. Paramvir Singh deserves all appreciation for this very meaningful effort and I congratulate him for taking it up. I hope it will inspire some young scholars to work on the life and work of Professor Harbans Singh.

Dharam Singh

Introduction

Professor Harbans Singh was an erudite scholar of Sikh religion and history. He belonged to a rural background of Punjab but, due to his hard work and dedication, he became during his lifetime a legendary figure in the world of learning, especially the field of Sikh studies. The colleagues of Professor Harbans Singh remember his scholarly dedication, discipline, administrative efficiency, loyalty to the university and performance of work. He was the founder registrar of the university and worked hard to build it administratively and scholarly. He established, first of its kind in India, Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies for comparative study of religions. He was the moving spirit behind the vision of Guru Gobind Singh Bhawan, a monumental structure at the Punjabi University Campus, Patiala: the building has since become a symbol of the University.

As I have learnt, Professor Harbans Singh was a soft-spoken, humble and generous personality but dedicated to his work and had the capacity to bring others in his fold. His remarkable understanding of Sikhism, profound knowledge of English and Punjabi languages and systematic presentation of the facts helped him emerge as a great scholar in the Sikh world. He devoted his life to the Sikh studies and delivered lectures on Sikhism in various Indian and foreign universities. The lectures he delivered at Berkeley, Kyoto and Mc-Gill universities had earned him international recognition and appreciation.

He produced more than a dozen valuable books on Sikhism but his monumental work, *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, containing about 3200 entries in 4 volumes showcasing the history of Sikh religion, Sikh philosophy, Sikh institutions, Sikh faiths and code of conduct ,etc. can well be called his crowning glory. When S. Kirpal Singh Narang, vice-chancellor of the University, entrusted this task to him he relinquished all others offices and responsibilities and made strenuous efforts to bring this work to fruition. Until the end of his life, he remained engaged in this work. The set-up he created to complete this monumental work turned into a full-fledged Department after his death in 1998.

His commitment to scholarship and his works were admired and evaluated by both academics and public men including Gurcharan Singh Tohra (former president SGPC), Joginder Singh Puar (former Vice-Chancellor Punjabi University, Patiala), Kartar Singh Duggal, Paramvir Singh, Rattan Singh Jaggi, Braham Jagdish Singh, Giani Balwant Singh Kotha Guru, Gurcharan Singh Chaman, and Tirath Singh. These prominent personalities of Sikh academics and leadership had shown

their deep reverence for Professor Harbans Singh and produced their write-ups in Punjabi language. Likewise, Bhagat Singh, Cyril G. Williams, Darshan Singh Maini, Darshan Singh, Dharam Singh, Eleanor Nicholls (now better-known as Eleanor Nesbitt), Ganda Singh, Gurbachan Singh Talib, Harkirat Singh, Hira Lall Chopra, I.J. Singh, J.L. Das, Khushwant Singh, Kuldip Singh Dhir, Kulraj Singh, Nirbhai Singh, Sant Singh Sekhon, Saran Singh, Spencer Lavan, W. Owen Cole, *et.al* have in their write-ups highlighted his personality in their articles in English language.

The book reviews and tributes to Professor Harbans Singh are extracted with gratitude from various journals and newspapers, such as *Abstracts of Sikh Studies, Religious Studies (Journal), Souvenir Professor Harbans Singh, The Journal of Asian Studies, The Journal of Religious Studies, The Mountain Path, The Panjab Past and Present, The Sikh Courier, The Sikh Review, The Spokesman Weekly* (all English) and *Ajit, Akali Patrika, Punjabi Tribune* and *Ranjit* in Punjabi language. The chronology of the book-reviews is exhibited alphabetically so as to make it convenient to the readers to search different reviews of a single book.

Professor Harbans Singh was not only a great scholar but he also made letter-writing a literary art. His mastery over language and diction and his choice of words in writing letters had a special charm and that is why many addressees have preserved them. His editing of entries with red pen shows his interest and commitment to the subject. He wrote letters to a number of scholars, sympathisers and friends who, out of their devotion and affection, have since preserved them. Some of these letters, showing his style and subject, are being published in this book.

This work is a humble effort at highlighting the scholastic personality of Professor Harbans Singh. The book is prepared with the help of Dr. Dharam Singh, a Sikh scholar in his staff who later worked in the Department as Editor-in-Chief. I am really very thankful to him for his kind help, inspiration and the article he has produced for the book on my request. Giani Balwant Singh of Kotha Guru was keen to prepare a document in the memory of Professor Harbans Singh. He often remembered Professor Harbans Singh as and when he came to the Department. Although he himself was a great scholar of Nirmala sect, yet he always took pride in being from the same village. I am grateful to him for contributing three articles on this great scholar of Sikhism.

Dr. Nripinder Singh and Dr. Nikki-Guninder Kaur, the son and daughter of Professor Harbans Singh, took keen interest in this book. The former has been kind enough to send from his personal albums some photographs of his father which add visual value to the book. I owe my gratitude to both of them for their kind help and interest.

Finally, I express my gratitude to my family, friends and library staff who helped me in preparation of the book.

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*ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ**

ਫੌਲਾਦ ਵਰਗਾ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਕਰਮਯੋਗੀ, ਉੱਚ ਆਚਰਨ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ, ਪੂਰਨ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਵਾਲਾ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ, ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਭੈਅ ਮੰਨ ਕੇ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਚੱਲਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਠਾਵਾਨ, ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਸ਼ੁਭ ਚਿੰਤਕ, ਅਨਨਯ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ, ਕੋਮਲ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਵਾਲਾ, ਸੂਖ਼ਮ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ, ਨਿਰਮਾਣ, ਸ਼ੁਭ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ, ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪ ਨਾ ਜਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ, ਧੀਰੇ-ਧੀਰੇ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲਾ, ਮਧੁਰ ਭਾਸ਼ੀ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ, ਅਨੰਦ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਿਸ਼ਟ ਮਧੁਰ ਬਾਣੀ ਅਨੇਕ ਅੜਾਉਣੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸੇ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਇਕ-ਇਕ ਵਾਕ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸੋਝੀ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਸੀ, ਅਗਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਧੁੰਧ ਉਡ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਕਰਮਯੋਗੀ ਕਲਮ ਦਾ ਧਨੀ, ਕਲਮ ਨੂੰ ਅਖੰਡ ਚਲਦੀ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਵੱਡੀਆਂ-ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਪਦਵੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਛਿਣ ਵਿਚ ਤਿਆਗ਼ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਤਵ ਦਾ ਸਵਾਮੀ, ਨਾ ਧਨ ਦੀ ਕਾਮਨਾ, ਨਾ ਪਦਵੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲਾਲਸਾ, ਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧੀ ਦਾ ਲੋਭ, ਨਾ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਦੀ ਹਉਮੈਂ, ਸਰਵਸਵ ਤਿਆਗ਼ ਕੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀਕਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਕਲਮ ਚਲਾਉਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ। ਸਰਬੱਤ ਤੋਂ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ, ਸਰਬੱਤ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਦਾਤਾਂ ਵੰਡਣ ਵਾਲਾ, ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਝੰਡਾ ਗੱਡਣ ਵਾਲਾ, ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਕੀਰਤੀ-ਪਤਾਕਾ ਝੁਲਦੀ ਸਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ-ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਰਹੇਗੀ। ਸਰਸਵਤੀ-ਪੁੱਤਰ, ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਮੁਕਟਮਣੀ, ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਸੂਰਜ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਉਦੈ ਹੋਇਆ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਮਾਤਾ ਰੂਪ ਕੌਰ ਅਤੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਰਾਮ ਲਾਲ ਉੱਪਲ ਦੇ ਘਰ 6 ਮਾਰਚ 1921 ਈਸਵੀ ਨੂੰ ਪਿੰਡ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ, ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਵਿਖੇ ਹੋਇਆ। ਪਿੰਡ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਇਮਰੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਰ ਜਮਾਤਾਂ ਪਾਸ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਹਾਈ ਸਕੂਲ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਤੋਂ ਮੈਟ੍ਰਿਕ ਪਾਸ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸੰਨ 1943 ਵਿਚ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਤੋਂ ਐਮ.ਏ. ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਖਿਆ ਪਾਸ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਇਸੇ ਕਾਲਜ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਲੈਕਚਰਾਰ ਲੱਗ ਗਏ। ਇਸੇ ਸਾਲ ਹੀ ਬਰਜਿੰਦਰਾ ਕਾਲਜ ਫ਼ਰੀਦਕੋਟ

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* ਪਿੰਡ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ, ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ।

ਵਿਖੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਮੁਖੀ ਨਿਯਤ ਹੋਏ। 23 ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ 1944 ਈਸਵੀ ਨੂੰ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਆਹ ਹੋਇਆ। ਪਤਨੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਸਰਦਾਰਨੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ[1] ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਥੋੜ੍ਹਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਕਾਲਜ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਨਿਯਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਪਰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਫ਼ਰੀਦਕੋਟ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਰਾਜਕੁਮਾਰ (ਟਿੱਕਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ) ਦੇ ਟਿਊਟਰ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ। ਟਿੱਕਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇਹਰਾਦੂਨ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਉੱਥੇ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ। ਦੇਹਰਾਦੂਨ ਵਿਖੇ ਰਾਜਕੁਮਾਰ ਦੀ ਪਦਵੀ ਰਾਜਕੀਯ ਹੋਣ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਟਿਊਟਰ ਦੀ ਪਦਵੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਠੀ, ਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਬੱਤ ਰਾਜਕੀਯ ਸਹੂਲਤਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਗਈਆਂ। ਇੱਥੇ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਵਿਹਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੇਅਰਥ ਨਹੀਂ ਗਵਾਇਆ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ, ਗੁਰਮਤਿ–ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ, ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਮਿਥਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਦੀਰਘ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਨਾਲ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਦੇਹਰਾਦੂਨ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਸਪੁੱਤਰ ਨ੍ਰਿਪਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਸਪੁੱਤਰੀ ਗੁਨਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ ਨੇ ਜਨਮ ਲਿਆ।[2]

ਸੰਨ 1960 ਈਸਵੀ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਸਕੱਤਰ ਬਣਾਏ ਗਏ ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਯਾਦਵਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਪਟਿਆਲਾਪਤੀ ਸਨ। ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਆਪ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸੁਝਾਉ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਉਂ 'ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ' ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਮੈਂ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ ਕਿਉਂ? ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ਕਿ, "ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨਾਉਂ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਵਿਚ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਨਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ। ਮੈਂ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ।" ਮੈਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਦੁਆਇਆ ਕਿ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਬਣੇਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਵੀ 'ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ' ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ 'ਆਫ਼ੀਸਰ ਆਨ ਸਪੈਸ਼ਲ ਡਿਊਟੀ' (ਓ.ਐਸ.ਡੀ.) ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਮਾਣ ਵੀ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਇਆ। ਸੰਨ 1962 ਈਸਵੀ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਧੀਵਤ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਦੇ ਕਾਇਮ ਹੋਣ 'ਤੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ ਬਣੇ।

ਕਈ ਸਾਲ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਬਾਰਾਂਦਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਚੱਲਦੀ ਰਹੀ। ਬਾਰਾਂਦਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਦਫ਼ਤਰ ਹੇਠਲੇ ਕਮਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਸੀ। ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦਾ ਜੋ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਵੇਖ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ, ਇਹ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਕਰਮ ਹੈ। ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਵੀ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸੁਝਾਉ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਕਵਾਇਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦਾ ਨਕਸ਼ਾ ਵੀ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਮੱਧ ਵਿਚ 'ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਵਨ' ਦੀ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਦਿਮਾਗ਼ ਦੀ ਦੇਣ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ

ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸੁਝਾਅ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਿੱਖ, ਹਿੰਦੂ, ਬੋਧ, ਇਸਲਾਮ ਅਤੇ ਈਸਾਈ ਪੰਜ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਹੋਈ। ਆਪ ਇਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਮੁਖੀ ਵੀ ਰਹੇ। ਜਦੋਂ ਵੀ ਮੈਂ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਬਾਰਾਂਦਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਇਕਵਾਇਰ ਹੋਈ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦਿਖਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਨਾਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਮੈਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੂਰ ਹੈ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਕਹਿਣ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਘਿਰ ਗਈ ਹੈ।

ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਰਬ ਗੁਣ ਭਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ, ਕੈਨੇਡਾ, ਜਰਮਨੀ ਆਦਿ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਕੀਤੀ। ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਚੰਗੇ ਤੱਤ/ਗੁਣ ਨੋਟ ਕੀਤੇ। ਇਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਗੁਣ/ਨਿਯਮ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਾਗੂ ਕੀਤੇ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਗੌਰਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਬਣਾਇਆ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਿਦਵਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਵਿਖਿਆਨ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿਦਵਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਕਾ ਜਮਾਇਆ। ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ੰਸਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀ।

ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਕਾ ਤਾਂ ਅਧਿਆਪਨ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਹਾਰਵਰਡ, ਕੈਂਬਰਿਜ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਜ਼ਟਿੰਗ ਫੈਲੋ ਅਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀ ਉੱਚ-ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਦੇ ਯੋਗ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਯਗ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਪਦਵੀ ਨਾਲ ਬੈਠ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਸੀ। ਦੇਸ਼-ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਤਨੀਆਂ ਹੀ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਗੈਰ-ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਸਭਾ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸੰਨ 1981 ਈਸਵੀ ਤੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਆਜੀਵਨ ਫੈਲੋ ਬਣਾਏ ਗਏ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ-ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਲਿਖਣ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਬਦਲੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਚੇ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਨਾਲ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ।

ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ 15-16 ਉੱਚ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੇ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖੇ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪੰਜਵੀਂ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਮੌਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਲਿਖਿਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਸੌ ਸਾਲਾ ਦਿਵਸ 'ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨ-ਕਥਾ ਲਿਖੀ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀਆਂ 17 ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਅਜਿਹਾ ਮਾਣ ਹਰ ਇਕ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ।

ਜਦ ਤੋਂ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ *ਇਨਸਾਇਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ* (ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼) ਲਿਖਣਾ ਅਰੰਭ ਕੀਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਇਕ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਰਵਸਵ ਦਾ ਤਿਆਗ਼ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਏਕਾਂਤਵਾਸੀ ਬਣ ਗਏ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਈਸ-ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਕਈ ਉੱਚ ਪਦਵੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਪੇਸ਼ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਪਰ ਸਭ ਪਦਵੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਨਿਮਰਤਾਪੂਰਵਕ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ ਸਹਿਤ ਤਿਆਗ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਸਮੂਹ ਪਦਵੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਲਿਖਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਇਕਾਗਰ ਚਿੱਤ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਆਪ ਜੀ

ਕਈ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਲਿਖਣ ਲਈ ਇਕਾਗਰ ਚਿੱਤ ਸਨ। ਤਕਰੀਬਨ ਅੱਧਾ ਕੰਮ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਈ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਲੰਘਣਾ ਪਿਆ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਭਰਾ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਅਤਿ ਪਿਆਰ ਸੀ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਜੀ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਹਾਇਰ ਸੈਕੰਡਰੀ ਸਕੂਲ, ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਦੇ ਵਾਈਸ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਅਤੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਸਨ। ਕੁਝ ਸਮੇਂ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪਤਨੀ ਸਰਦਾਰਨੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਪ੍ਰਲੋਕ ਗਮਨ ਕਰ ਗਈ। ਇਹ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਮੌਤਾਂ ਅਸਹਿ ਸਨ। ਆਪ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਵਿਚ ਅਡੋਲ ਰਹੇ ਪਰ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਹੋਰ ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨ ਲੈਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਤੁਲੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਕੁਝ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਆਪ ਜੀ 'ਤੇ ਅਧਰੰਗ ਦਾ ਹਮਲਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਬੀਮਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਅਸਹਿ ਪੀੜਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਹਿਨ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਵੀ ਸਾਰਾ ਦਿਨ ਲਿਖਣ ਵਿਚ ਰੁੱਝੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਉਲੇਖਨੀਯ ਲਗਨ ਅਤੇ ਅਣਥੱਕ ਯਤਨ ਨਾਲ ਚਾਰ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ। ਹੁਣ ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਸਰਵਪੱਖੀ ਗਿਆਨ-ਚਾਨਣ ਵੰਡ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਇਸ ਕੋਸ਼ ਨਾਲ ਇਤਨੇ ਅਭੇਦ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਕਿ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ 'ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਵਾਲੇ' ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਕੋਸ਼ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦਾ ਨਾਉਂ ਵੀ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਉੱਤੇ 'ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਵਿਭਾਗ' ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ।

ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਉੱਤੇ ਅਟੱਲ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਸੀ। ਆਪ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ, "ਬੀਮਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਅੰਗ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਜਵਾਬ ਦੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਦਿਲ-ਦਿਮਾਗ਼ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸਵਸਥ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਉਤਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਇਸੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਹੇਗਾ ਜਿਤਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ।" ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਕਥਨ ਅੱਖਰ-ਅੱਖਰ ਸੱਚ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੋਇਆ।

ਆਪ ਜੀ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਪੱਤਰ ਲਿਖਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਪੱਤਰ ਦੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ, 'ਖਿਮਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਮੈਂ ਹਸਤਾਖ਼ਰ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਅਸਮਰੱਥ ਹਾਂ'। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਰੁਧਾਕੰਠ ਹੋ ਜਾਇਆ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ।

ਆਪ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਮਨ ਵਾਲੇ, ਮਹਾਨ ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ, ਸਰਬੱਤ ਦੇ ਹਿਤੈਸ਼ੀ ਮਨ, ਕਰਮ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਸੱਚ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਸਨ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਨੇ ਸ਼ੁਭ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਝੋਲੀ ਭਰ ਕੇ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ 77 ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਦੀ ਆਯੂ ਤੱਕ ਮਨ, ਬਾਣੀ, ਕਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਕਲਮ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਵੰਡਿਆ। ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਆਪ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਵਾਨ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਸਨ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਨਿਤਨੇਮੀ, ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਭੈਅ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ, ਆਜੀਵਨ ਗੁਰੂ-ਜਸ ਦਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਪਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਅਮਰ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਅਮਰ ਪਦਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਕੇ 30 ਮਈ 1998 ਈਸਵੀ ਦਿਨ ਦੇ 11 ਵੱਜ ਕੇ 30 ਮਿੰਟ 'ਤੇ ਸੱਚਖੰਡ ਨੂੰ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ।

ਹਵਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਟਿੱਪਣੀਆਂ

1. ਬੀਬੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਜੀ ਸੁਹੱਪਣ (ਸੁੰਦਰਤਾ) ਵਿਚ ਅਪੂਰਵ (ਮਹਾਨ ਖ਼ੂਬਸੂਰਤ) ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਨੇਕੀ, ਭਲਾਈ, ਸਹਾਨੁਭੂਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ, ਸਭ ਦੇ ਹਿਤਕਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ, ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਸਨ। ਬੀਬੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਦੀ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਣ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ:

    "ਮੈਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਬੀਵੀ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਏ, ਮੁਹੱਲੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁੜੀਆਂ ਚਿੜੀਆਂ ਆਣ ਇਕੱਠੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਖ਼ੂਬ ਧਮੱਚੜ ਪਾਇਆ। ਬੱਚੇ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਫਿਰਨ, 'ਕੋਈ ਰਾਣੀ ਆਈ ਹੈ'। ਮੇਰੀ ਤ੍ਰੀਮਤ ਦੇ ਚੇਹਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਤੱਕ-ਤੱਕ ਜਨਾਨੀਆਂ ਲਟਬਾਉਰੀਆਂ ਹੋ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਨਾ ਆਵੇ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਬਠਾਉਣ, ਕਿੱਥੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਉਠਾਉਣ। ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਨੇ ਹੋਏ ਬਸਤਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਨੂੰ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਚੇਹਰੇ ਦੀ ਟੁਕੜੀ ਨੂੰ, ਜਿਹੜੀ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਦੀ ਚਾਨਣੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੱਟੀ ਹੋਈ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ, ਵੇਖ-ਵੇਖ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਹੋ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਅਗਲੀ ਸਵੇਰ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਇਕੋ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਚਰਚਾ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਸੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਸਿੰਘਣੀ ਦੀ ਫੇਰੀ ਦਾ।"

    ਬੀਬੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ 23 ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ 1924 ਈਸਵੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਵਾ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਤ੍ਰਿਹਣ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਨਗਰ ਕਸੂਰ (ਹੁਣ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ) ਵਿਚ ਹੋਇਆ। ਬਾਵਾ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਰਾਮ ਥੰਮਨ ਜਾਗੀਰ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਅਤੇ ਰੇਲਵੇ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਲਾਜ਼ਮ ਸਨ। ਰੇਲਵੇ ਦੀ ਨੌਕਰੀ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਅਤੇ ਫ਼ਿਰੋਜ਼ਪੁਰ ਵਿਚ ਰਹੇ।

    ਬੀਬੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਨੇ ਮੁੱਢਲੀ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਲੁਧਿਆਣੇ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਦਸਵੀਂ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਸਕੂਲ ਫ਼ਿਰੋਜ਼ਪੁਰ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਸ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਰਾਜਿੰਦਰਾ ਕਾਲਜ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਤੋਂ ਬੀ.ਏ. ਦੀ ਡਿਗਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸੰਯੋਗ ਵੱਸ ਬਾਵਾ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਾਮ ਲਾਲ ਜੀ ਬਠਿੰਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਇਨਾਤ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਪਸ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਕਟ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਕਾਲਜ ਫ਼ਰੀਦਕੋਟ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਮੁਖੀ ਸਨ। ਨਿਕਟਵਰਤੀ ਮੇਲ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਰਸਪਰ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ 23 ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ 1944 ਈਸਵੀ ਨੂੰ ਬੀਬੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਬਠਿੰਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਆਹ ਸੰਪੰਨ ਹੋਇਆ।

2. ਨ੍ਰਿਪਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਉੱਚ ਪਦਵੀ ਪਰ ਸਸ਼ੋਭਿਤ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਲੇਖਕ ਹਨ। ਨ੍ਰਿਪਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਰਚਨਾ *ਸਿੱਖ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਪ੍ਰੰਪਰਾ* ਦੀ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ੰਸਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ।

    ਗੁਨਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ ਵੀ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਕਾਲਜ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਗੁਨਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ ਦੇ ਰਚਿਤ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਅਤੇ ਖੋਜ ਪੱਤਰ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਭਰਿਆ ਸਥਾਨ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹਨ।

2

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸੁਪਨਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਸਦਾ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ

*ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ**

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਜਿਸ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਜਨਮ ਹੋਇਆ, ਜਿਸ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀਆਂ ਗਲੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਖੇਡਦਿਆਂ, ਦੌੜਦਿਆਂ, ਮੁੱਢਲੀ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਚਪਨ ਬੀਤਿਆ, ਜਿਥੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਉੱਚ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਲਈ ਉਡਾਨ ਭਰੀ, ਉਹ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਦਾ ਪਿੰਡ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ। ਮੇਰਾ ਜਨਮ ਵੀ ਇਸੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਆਯੂ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ 12 ਵਰਸ਼ ਵੱਡੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਚਪਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਵੇਖਿਆ, ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਗਤ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਹਸਤੀ ਦੇ ਬਚਪਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਸੁਹਾਵਨੇ ਪਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਮ-ਉਮਰ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੁਣਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ, ਕਿ ਉਹ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਕੂਲੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ, ਕਿਵੇਂ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਕੇ ਖੇਡਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਭਾਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਬੱਚੇ ਦਾ ਹਵੇਲੀਆਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀਆਂ ਗਲੀਆਂ, ਪਾਠਸ਼ਾਲਾ, ਸੱਥਾਂ, ਢਾਬਾਂ ’ਤੇ ਵਿਚਰਨਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਜਿਹਨ ’ਤੇ ਅਕਸਰ ਹੀ ਚਿਤਵਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਬੀਤੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੇਪਰਵਾਹ ਬਚਪਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਿਠੀਆਂ ਯਾਦਾਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਮੁਖਾਰਬਿੰਦ ਤੋਂ ਅਨੇਕ ਵਾਰ ਕੰਨੀ ਸੁਣਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ। ਜਦੋਂ ਹੱਸਣ-ਕੁੱਦਣ ਹਵੇਲੀਆਂ ਲਾਗੇ ਲੁਕਣ ਮਿਟੀ ਖੇਡਣ, ਪਾਸ਼ੇ ਦੀ ਖੇਡ ਵਾਲੀ ਚੌਂਕੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਸ਼ਾ ਖੇਡਣ, ਪ੍ਰੈਮਰੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿਚ ਅਧਿਆਪਕ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਆਤਮਾ ਰਾਮ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਮੁੱਢਲੀ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਲਿਖਣ, ਪੱਕੇ ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਉਠ ਤੇ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਬਠਿੰਡੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਯਾਦਾਂ, ਸਾਂਝੀਆਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਧੀਰੇ-ਧੀਰੇ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਮਧੁਰ ਭਾਸ਼ੀ ਸ਼ੈਲੀ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਘੁਲੇ-ਮਿਲੇ ਸ਼ਰਬਤੀ ਮਿਠਾਸ ਵਰਗੇ ਬਚਪਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਝਲਕੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੀ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਚਾਹ ਪੀਣ ਦਾ ਇਤਨਾ ਰਿਵਾਜ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਜਿਤਨਾ ਹੁਣ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਤਿੰਨ ਸਾਲ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹ ਪੀਣ ਲੱਗ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੋਈ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਸੋਢੀ ਜਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਿਰਧ ਅਵਸਥਾ

* ਪਿੰਡ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ, ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ।

ਵਿਚ ਮੰਜੀ 'ਤੇ ਪਏ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਚਾਹ ਦੀ ਗੜਬੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੰਜੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਰਹਾਣੇ ਰੱਖੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੋਢੀ ਜਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਸੋਢੀ ਜਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਕਟੋਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਚਾਹ ਦਾ ਪੱਕਾ ਪਿਆਕੜ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ। ਸੁਬਹ ਉੱਠਣ ਸਾਰ, ਬਿਨਾਂ ਮੂੰਹ ਧੋਤੇ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਮਲਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੋਢੀ ਜਿਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਲ ਚਲਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਚਾਹ ਪੀਂਦਾ। ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪਣੀ ਨਾਨੀ ਦੀ ਬੁੱਕਲ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠਾ ਸੀ। ਨਾਨੀ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗੀ ਜੋ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਘਰ ਮੰਜੀ ਤੇ ਬੁੱਢਾ ਪਿਆ ਹੈ ਸੁਬਹ ਉੱਠਣ ਸਾਰ ਉਸ ਕੋਲ ਕੀ ਲੈਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ? ਉਹ ਬੁੱਢਾ ਮੇਰੀ ਚਾਹ ਹੈ, ਮੇਰੀ ਚਾਹ ਹੈ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਨੀ ਦੀ ਬੁੱਕਲ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲ ਕੇ ਸੋਢੀ ਜਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੱਲ ਭੱਜ ਗਿਆ।

ਚਾਰ ਪੰਜ ਸਾਲ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਢਾਣੀ ਸੀ। ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਸੋਢੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਮਿਹਰਾ, ਖੱਤਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਕਾਂਟਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਦਰਜੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਬਲੋਅ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਚਾਰੇ ਕਈ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਖੇਡਾਂ ਖੇਡਦੇ ਸਨ। ਚਾਰੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਭੋਥੇ ਬੰਨ ਕੇ ਮੋਹਢਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਸੋਟੀਆਂ (ਜਾਣੀ ਡਾਂਗਾਂ) ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਗੱਭਰੂਆਂ (ਵੈਲੀਆਂ) ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਆਕੜ-ਆਕੜ ਕੇ ਤੁਰਦੇ ਇਹ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਦੀ ਮਨ ਭਾਉਂਦੀ ਖੇਡ ਸੀ।

ਇਹ ਢਾਣੀ ਚੋਰ-ਸਿਪਾਹੀ ਦੀ ਖੇਡ ਵੀ ਖੇਡਦੀ ਸੀ, ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਥਾਣੇਦਾਰ ਬਣਦਾ ਮਿਹਰਾ ਸੋਢੀ ਸਿਪਾਹੀ, ਕਾਂਟਾ ਖੱਤਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਲੋਅ ਚੋਰ ਬਣਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਇਹ ਚੋਰ-ਸਿਪਾਹੀ ਦੀ ਖੇਡ, ਖੇਡ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਚੋਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਕੌਲਸਰ ਦੇ ਬਣਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲੁੱਕ ਗਏ। ਮਗਰ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗਈ, ਬਲੋਅ ਭੱਜ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੀ ਕੰਧ ਟੱਪ ਗਿਆ ਮਗਰ ਮਿਹਰਾਂ ਸੋਢੀ ਫੜਨ ਭੱਜਿਆ। ਖੜਕਾ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠੇ ਕਈ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਬਣਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਵੇਖਣ ਆਏ ਤਾਂ ਸੋਢੀ ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਂਟਾ ਖੱਤਰੀ ਦੋਨੋਂ ਫੜ੍ਹ ਲਏ ਅਤੇ ਹੱਸਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਬੋਲੇ ਥਾਣੇਦਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਚੋਰ ਦੋਨ੍ਹੋਂ ਫੜ੍ਹੇ ਗਏ।[1]

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਪ੍ਰੈਮਰੀ (ਚੌਥੀ ਜਮਾਤ) ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰੈਮਰੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਸ ਕੀਤੀ। ਪ੍ਰੈਮਰੀ ਜਮਾਤ ਦਾ ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨ ਬਠਿੰਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਬਠਿੰਡਾ, ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ 40-44 ਕਿਲੋਮੀਟਰ ਹੈ। ਬਠਿੰਡੇ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰੈਮਰੀ ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਆਪ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ:

> ਜਿਸ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਖਿਆ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠਣਾ ਸੀ, ਮੈਂ ਜਮਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਨਿੱਕਾ ਹਲਕਾ-ਫੁਲਕਾ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਸਾਂ। ਊਠ ਤੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਨ ਬੈਠਣ ਦੀ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਕਾ ਹੀ ਜਾਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਊਠ ਤੇ ਊਠ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਲਾਂ ਭੀ ਕਿੰਨੀਆਂ। ਪਿੰਡੋਂ ਤਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਛਾਵੇਂ ਚਲੇ। ਅੱਗੇ ਚਾਹ ਪੀ ਕੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਵਾਰ ਊਠ 'ਤੇ ਸਵਾਰ ਹੋਏ ਮੈਂ ਊਠ ਦੀ ਉੱਠਣ-ਬੈਠਣ ਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਅਗਿਆਤ ਸਾਂ। ਊਠ ਗੋਡਿਆਂ ਭਾਰ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਉੱਪਰੋਂ ਹੀ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਨੂੰ ਲੁਟਕ ਗਿਆ ਹੇਠ ਰੇਤਾ ਸੀ। ਸੱਟ ਫੇਟ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਅ ਰਿਹਾ। ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਫੇਰ ਇਸੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ

> ਹੋਈ ਮੈਂ ਬੈਠਣ ਲੱਗੇ ਉਠ ਤੋਂ ਤਿਲਕ ਕੇ ਧਰਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਚਫਾਲ ਆਣ ਢਠਾ। ਪ੍ਰੰਤੂ ਖੈਰ ਬਲਾ ਰਹੀ। ਸਾਡੇ ਗੁਆਂਢ ਇਕ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਤ੍ਰੀਮਤ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ "ਸਾਡੇ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਰਵਾਇਤ ਹੈ ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਨਿੱਕਾ ਬਾਲਕ ਡਿੱਗ ਪਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਫਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੋਚ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।" ਮੇਰਾ ਉਸ ਦਿਨ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੋ ਵਾਰੀ ਬਚਾਅ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਆਪਣੇ ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਸ ਹੋਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ, "ਲੱਤਾਂ ਘਸੀਟਦਾ ਮੈਂ ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਪਾਸ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਪੰਡਿਤ ਆਤਮਾ ਰਾਮ ਦਾ ਚੰਡਿਆ ਬਾਲਕ ਫੇਲ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ।"

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਬਚਪਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਦੋ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਲਿਖੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਬਚਪਨ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਸੱਚ-ਮੁੱਚ ਹੀ ਮਹਾਨ ਸੀ। ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਬਜ਼ਾਰ ਦੀ ਰੌਣਕ ਉਲੇਖਨੀਯ ਸੀ। ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਬਜ਼ਾਰ ਦਾ ਵਪਾਰ ਦੂਰ ਤਕ ਸੀ। ਬਾਹਰੋਂ ਵੀ ਮਾਲ ਵੱਡੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਵਪਾਰਕ ਪਿੰਡ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਬਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਚੂੰਗੀ ਦਾ ਦਫ਼ਤਰ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਚੂੰਗੀ ਬਾਹਰੋਂ ਆਏ ਮਾਲ ਤੇ ਲੱਗਦੀ ਸੀ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ, "ਪਿੰਡ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਹੁਤ ਪਰਾਣਾ ਪਿੰਡ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਮੋੜ੍ਹੀ ਬਾਬਾ ਪ੍ਰਿਥੀ ਚੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਗੱਡੀ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਕੁਝ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਗਰ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ 'ਕੋਠਾ ਪ੍ਰਿਥੀ ਚੰਦ' ਵੀ ਡਿਠਾ ਹੈ। ਹੌਲੀ-ਹੌਲੀ ਇੱਥੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਿੱਤਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਗੋਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਲੋਕ ਆਣ ਅਬਾਦ ਹੋਏ।" ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀਆਂ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਇਮਾਰਤਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ:

> ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਤਿੰਨ ਹਵੇਲੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਬਾਹਰ ਵਾਲੀ ਹਵੇਲੀ, ਅੰਦਰ ਵਾਲੀ ਹਵੇਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਲ੍ਹਾ। ਹਵੇਲੀਆਂ ਸੋਢੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਕਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਭੱਲੇ ਬਾਵਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਕਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਵੀ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਸੋਢੀ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਬਾਵਾ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਤਾਂ ਨਾਨਕੀ ਢੇਰੀ ਤੇ ਆ ਕੇ ਬੈਠੇ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਇਮਾਰਤਾਂ ਵੱਡੇ-ਵੱਡੇ ਹਾਤੇ ਮੱਲੀ ਬੈਠੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਛੋਟੀ ਨਾਨਕਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਇੱਟ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਣੀਆਂ ਇਹ ਇਮਾਰਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਕਲਾ ਦੇ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਕਈ ਅਲੌਕਿਕ ਭੇਦ ਛੁਪਾਈ ਬੈਠੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਬਾਹਰਲੀ ਹਵੇਲੀ ਵਾਲਾ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਕਿ ਸੋਢੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਕਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ।

ਬਾਵਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਕਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਜੋ ਮੇਰੀ ਨਾਨੀ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਦਾ ਇਕ ਬੁਰਜ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡਾ ਲੁਕਣ ਮੀਟੀ ਖੇਡਨ ਦਾ ਅੱਡਾ ਸੀ। ਹੁਣ ਇਹ ਇਮਾਰਤਾਂ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਗੇੜ ਨਾਲ ਢਹਿ ਢੇਰੀ ਹੋ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਨਾਲ ਕਦਮ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ ਕੋਈ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਕਿਤੇ ਵਿਖਾਈ

ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦੀ।

ਗੋਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਸੋਢੀਆਂ, ਸਿਧੂਆਂ, ਸੰਧੂਆਂ, ਬੜੈਚਿਆਂ, ਅਠਵਾਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਖਹਿਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਗਿੱਲ, ਢਿੱਲੋਂ, ਮਾਨ, ਭੁੱਲਰ, ਬਾਜਵੇ, ਧਾਲੀਵਾਲ, ਪੰਨੂੰ, ਬਾਠ, ਕਲੇਰ, ਰੰਧਾਵੇ ਆਦਿ ਸੌ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਗੋਤ ਹਨ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਖੱਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੈਣੀ ਗੋਤ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ। ਗੋਤਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਯਾਦ ਆ ਗਿਆ। ਮਾਲਵੇ ਦੇ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਟਾਵਾਂ ਟਿੱਲਾ ਹੀ ਮੈਣੀ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੋ ਘਰ ਸੈਣੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵੀ ਹਨ।

ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਚਾਰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ—ਹਕੀਮ ਨੱਥਾ ਸਿੰਘ, ਸੋਢੀ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਿੰਘ, ਮਾਸਟਰ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਆਤਮਾ ਰਾਮ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਣਿਕ ਮੋਚੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ:

> **ਹਕੀਮ ਨੱਥਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ—**ਸਰਦਾਰ ਨੱਥਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਬੜੀ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਸਨ। ਬਹੁਤ ਥੋੜ੍ਹਾ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਸਨ। ਕਿਸੇ ਝਗੜੇ ਝਾਂਝੇ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਆਪਣੀ ਮਿਥੀ ਤੋਰ ਤੁਰੇ ਜਾਣਾ। ਅੱਠ ਵਜੇ ਜਾ ਦੁਕਾਨ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਣੀ ਬਾਰਾਂ ਵਜੇ ਦੁਪਹਿਰੇ ਰੋਟੀ ਘਰ ਆ ਖਾਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਦੋ ਵਜੇ ਫਿਰ ਦੁਕਾਨ 'ਤੇ ਜਾ ਬੈਠਣਾ। ਬੁੱਧਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਸੀ ਇਸ਼ਨਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ, ਟਾਇਮ ਦੇ ਏਨੇ ਪਾਬੰਦ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਵਾਜਾਈ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਘੜੀਆਂ ਠੀਕ ਕਰਦੇ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਸਦਾ ਸਫੈਦ ਸਵੱਛ ਵਸਤਰ ਪਹਿਨਦੇ, ਮਜਾਲੇ ਜੇ ਕਿਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਦਾਗ਼ ਜਾਂ ਮੈਲ ਦਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਹੋਵੇ ਹਿਕਮਤ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਉੱਚਾ ਦਰਜਾ ਸੀ। ਦੂਰ-ਦੂਰ ਤੱਕ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੋਭਾ ਫ਼ੈਲੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ।
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> **ਸੋਢੀ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ—**ਮੇਰੇ ਇਕ ਮਾਮਾ ਜੀ ਸਨ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਿੰਘ। ਉਹ ਮੇਰੀ ਬੀਬੀ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਤਾਏ ਦੇ ਸਪੁੱਤਰ ਸਨ। ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੁੱਤਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਵੱਧ ਮੇਰੀ ਨਾਨੀ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕੀਤੀ। ਬੜੇ ਉੱਚੇ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਸਨ। ਬਸ ਮੁਨੱਖ ਦੇ ਜਾਮੇ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਆ ਉਤਰੇ ਸਨ। ਬੜੀ ਸੰਜੀਵ, ਸੁੰਦਰ ਮੂਰਤ ਬੜੇ ਮਿੱਠ ਬੋਲੜੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਸਨ। ਗੱਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਬੁੱਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਫ਼ੁੱਲ ਕਿਰਦੇ ਹੋਣ ਦਿਲ ਭੀ ਰੱਬ ਨੇ ਬੜਾ ਸਖੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਆ ਸੀ, ਦੂਰ ਕਲਕੱਤੇ ਵਿਚ ਬੰਗਾਲ ਨਾਗਪੁਰ ਰੇਲਵੇ ਵਿਚ ਬੜੀ ਉੱਚ ਪਦਵੀ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਸਨ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਦਾ ਖਤਾਬ ਵੀ ਸੀ ਪ੍ਰੰਤੂ ਸਾਦਗੀ ਤੇ ਹਲੀਮਤ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਆਪ ਸਨ।
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> ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਕਿੰਨੀਆਂ ਵਿਧਵਾ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਰੋਜ਼ੀਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਾਏ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਦਸਤੂਰ ਦੇ ਬੜੇ ਪੱਕੇ ਸਨ। ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਬੈਠੇ ਬਿਠਾਇਆਂ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਮਨੀਆਰਡਰ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਜਾਣ, ਸਾਰੇ ਮਨੀਆਰਡਰ ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਲਿਖ ਦਿੰਦੇ।
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> ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਲੰਮੀ ਛੁੱਟੀ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਮਾਮਾ ਜੀ ਪਿੰਡ ਆਏ। ਨਵੀਂ ਹਵੇਲੀ

> ਪਾਉਣੀ ਸੀ। ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਲਕੱਤੇ ਤੋਂ ਤਵਿਆ ਵਾਲਾ ਵਾਜਾ ਵੀ ਲਿਆਏ। ਇਹ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਅਜੂਬਾ ਸੀ। ਤ੍ਰਿਕਾਲਾਂ ਪੈਂਦਿਆਂ ਗਾਉਣ ਸੁਣਨ ਲਈ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਵਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਣਾ। ਅਖੀਰ ਮਾਮਾ ਜੀ ਮਸ਼ੀਨ ਚੁੱਕ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਲੈ ਗਏ ਉੱਥੇ ਬੜੀ ਰੌਣਕ ਲੱਗਦੀ।[2]
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> **ਪੰਡਿਤ ਆਤਮਾ ਰਾਮ ਜੀ—**ਪੰਡਿਤ ਆਤਮਾ ਰਾਮ ਜੇਡਾ ਲਾਇਕ ਅਧਿਆਪਕ ਨੇੜੇ ਤੇੜੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਮਾੜਚੂ ਜਿਹੀ ਦੇਹ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਆਤਮਾ ਰਾਮ ਜੀ ਬੜੇ ਹੀ ਸਲੀਕੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਨ। ਬੜਾ ਹੀ ਸਵਾਰ ਕੇ ਪੱਟੀਦਾਰ ਸਾਫਾ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਹੀ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਦੇ। ਸਕੂਲ ਵੱਡਾ ਸਾਰਾ ਇਕ ਮੁਸਤਤੀਲ ਕਮਰਾ ਸੀ। ਉੱਥੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਦੁਪਹਿਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਹੀ ਸੌਂ ਲੈਣਾ। ਉੱਥੇ ਆਟਾ ਗੁੰਨ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਫੁਲਕੇ ਲਾਹ ਲੈਣੇ। ਉੱਥੇ ਹੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਵੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਵੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਪੂਜਾ ਪਾਠ ਕਰ ਲੈਣਾ।[3]
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> **ਮਾਣਕ ਮੋਚੀ—**ਮਾਣਕ ਪਿੰਡ ਦਾ ਸਿਰਕੱਢ ਮੋਚੀ ਸੀ। ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਚਿੱਟੇ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਨਹਿਰੀ ਤਿੱਲੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੱਢੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਦਾ ਜੁੱਤੀਆਂ ਉਹ ਦੂਰ-ਦੂਰ ਭੇਜਦਾ। ਕਿਨੀ ਨਰਮ ਮੁਲਾਇਮ ਖਲ ਮਾਣਕ ਲਾਉਂਦਾ ਸੀ।

ਪੈਰ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਈ ਜੁੱਤੀ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਕਿ ਪੈਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਨਹੀਂ। ਰੁਪਏ ਪੈਸੇ ਸੰਭਾਲਣ ਦਾ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ ਢੰਗ/ਤਰੀਕਾ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਲਿਖਤ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਇੰਨੇ ਬੈਂਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ। ਨਾ ਬੈਂਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰੁਪਏ ਰੱਖਣ ਦਾ ਰਿਵਾਜ ਸੀ। ਰੁਪਏ ਚਾਂਦੀ ਦੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਸੁਰਖਯਤ ਥਾਂ (ਕਮਰੇ) ਵਿਚ ਟੋਆ ਪੁੱਟ ਕੇ ਨੱਪ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਘਰ ਦਾ ਮੁਖੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਚੋਰੀ ਰੁਪਏ ਨਪਦਾ ਸੀ। ਟੋਏ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਰੁਪਏ ਕੱਢ ਨਾ ਲਏ ਜਾਣ, ਇਹ ਧਿਆਨ ਵੀ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਸੀ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ, "ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਜਦ ਵੀ ਪਿੰਡ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਸੱਬਲ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਨ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਮਰੇ ਦੇ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ। ਬੂਹਾ ਭੀੜ ਕੇ ਉਹ ਇਕ ਖਾਸਾ ਡੂੰਘਾ ਟੋਆ ਪੁਟ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਂਦੀ ਦੇ ਰੁਪਇਆਂ ਵਾਲੀ ਥੈਲੀ ਉਲਟਾ ਦਿੰਦੇ। ਥੈਲੀ ਉਹੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਥਾਂ ਹਰ ਵਾਰੀ ਬਦਲਿਆ ਹੁੰਦਾ।"

ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਜੈਤੋਂ ਦੇ ਸਫਰ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਦੱਸਦੇ ਹਨ, ਇਥੋਂ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਰੇਲ ਫੜਿਆ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਆਉਣਾ ਇਕ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਦਿਲ ਹੀ ਬੜਾ ਉਦਾਸ ਹੋਣਾ। ਐਡੀਆਂ ਰੌਣਕਾਂ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਆਉਣਾ ਕਿੰਨਾ ਕਠਿਨ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਤੜਕੇ ਮੂੰਹ ਹਨੇਰੇ ਉਠਣਾ ਤਾਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਲਈ ਮੁਸੀਬਤ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਨਾਨੀ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਹੌਕੇ ਭਰਦੇ ਫਿਰਨਾ ਨਾਲੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਖਿਡਾਉਣੇ ਆਲਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਭਾਲਦੇ ਫਿਰਨਾ। ਨਾਨੀ ਜੀ ਤਾਂ ਰੱਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਇਆ ਜਾਇਆ ਕਰਦੇ, ਸਾਡੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਬਲਦ-ਗੱਡੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਚੱਲਿਤ ਸੀ, ਸਫ਼ਰ ਤੇ ਟੁਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਕ ਦੋ ਦਿਨ

ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੀ ਬਲਦ-ਗੱਡੀ ਪੱਕੀ ਕਰਨੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਸਤਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਬੱਸਾਂ ਕਿਥੇ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। *ਮੜ੍ਹੀ ਦਾ ਦੀਵਾ* ਵਾਲੇ ਗੁਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਜੈਤੋਂ ਮਸਾਂ-ਮਸਾਂ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਜਿਥੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਗੱਡੀ ਫੜਨੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਪੂਰੇ ਦਸ ਕੋਹ ਦਾ ਪੈਂਡਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਝਿੜੀ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਸੀ, ਮੈਂ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਝਿੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਡਾਕੂ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਝਿੜੀ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਲੰਘਦਿਆਂ ਕਾਲਜਾ ਮੂੰਹ ਨੂੰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਸੀ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਵਿਆਹ ਬਠਿੰਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਪਤਨੀ ਸਮੇਤ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ ਆਏ। ਇਸ ਵਾਰਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਤਨੀ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸ਼ੈਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਫੇਰੀ ਦਾ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਰੂਪਮਾਨ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ "ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ 1944 ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰਾ ਵਿਵਾਹ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਅਸੀਂ ਦੋਨੋ, ਮੈਂ ਤੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਬੀਵੀ, ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਏ। ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਨੀ ਜੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਚਲਾਣਾ ਕਰ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਸਨ। ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੀ-ਕੀ ਚਾਅ ਮਲ੍ਹਾਰ ਕਰਨੇ ਸਨ। ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਮੁਹੱਲੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁੜੀਆਂ ਚਿੜੀਆਂ ਆਣ ਇਕੱਠੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਖ਼ੂਬ ਧਮੱਚੜ ਪਾਇਆ। ਬੱਚੇ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ 'ਫਿਰਨ ਕੋਈ ਰਾਣੀ ਆਈ, ਕੋਈ ਰਾਣੀ ਆਈ।' ਮੇਰੀ ਤ੍ਰੀਮਤ ਦੇ ਚੇਹਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਤਕ ਕੇ ਜਨਾਨੀਆਂ ਲਟਬਉਰੀਆ ਹੋ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਨਾ ਆਵੇ ਕਿ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਬਿਠਾਉਣ, ਕਿੱਥੇ ਉਠਾਉਣ। ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਨੇ ਬਸਤਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਨੂੰ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਚੇਹਰੇ ਦੀ ਟੁਕੜੀ ਨੂੰ, ਜੋ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਚਾਨਣੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੱਢੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ, ਵੇਖ-ਵੇਖ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਹੋ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਅਗਲੀ ਸਵੇਰ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਇਕੋ ਹੀ ਗੱਲ ਸੀ ਉਹ ਸੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਤੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਸਿੰਘਣੀ ਦੀ ਨਾਨਕੇ ਫੇਰੀ ਦੀ।"

ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ, ਮਹਾਨਤਾ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਾ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ, "ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਮੇਰੇ ਦਿਲ ਨੂੰ ਜੋ ਧੂ ਪਾਉਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਮੈਂ ਅੱਜ ਤਕ ਕਿਧਰੋਂ ਹੋਰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ—ਨਾ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ, ਨਾ ਲੰਡਨ, ਨਾ ਵਾਸਿੰਗਟਨ, ਨਾ ਰੈਸਟਨ। ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਚਿਰ ਨਾਨੀ ਜੀ ਜਿਉਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਗਰਮੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਛੁੱਟੀਆਂ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਬਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ। ਹਰ ਉਹ ਤਿੰਨ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਤਾਸ਼ ਜਾਂ ਪਾਸ਼ਾ ਖੇਡਣ ਵਿਚ ਬਤਾ ਦੇਣੇ। ਮੇਰੇ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਮਿੱਤਰ, ਮਾਮੇ, ਭਰਾ ਸਾਰੇ ਹੈਰਾਨ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਕਿ ਤਾਸ਼-ਪਾਸ਼ੇ ਦਾ ਐਡਾ ਸ਼ੈਦਾਈ ਇਹ ਚਾਰ ਅੱਖਰ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਗਿਆ?"

ਅੱਗੇ ਦੱਸਦੇ ਹਨ, "ਮੇਰਾ ਜਨਮ ਵੀ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਬਚਪਨ ਸਾਰਾ ਜਾਂ ਇਉਂ ਕਹਿ ਲਵੋ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਜਦ ਮੈਂ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਪਾਸ ਫਿਰੋਜ਼ਪੁਰ ਜਾਂ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸਾਂ, ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਲੰਘਿਆ। ਇਹੀ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਲਾਡਲੇ, ਪਿਆਰੇ ਦਿਨ ਸਨ। ਖ਼ੁਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਲੱਦੇ, ਮਹਿਕਾਂ ਖਲੇਰਦੇ ਇਹ ਛੁੱਟੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਦਿਨ ਹਾਸੇ ਚੌੜ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਲੰਘ ਜਾਂਦੇ।"

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਲ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਦਾ ਮੋਹ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਹੱਡਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਚਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ।

'ਜਨਨੀ ਜਨਮ ਭੂਮੀਸਚ ਸਵਰਗਾਦਪੀ ਗਰੀਯਸੀ' ਵਾਲਾ ਕਥਨ ਇੱਥੇ ਸਾਰਥਕ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ/ਵਿਭਾਗੀ ਰੁਝੇਵਿਆਂ ਕਾਰਣ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਅਸਮਰੱਥ ਸਨ। ਮੈਨੂੰ 8 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1993 ਦੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੱਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ, 'ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਉਣ ਨੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨ ਸਦਾ ਹੀ ਲੋਚਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕੀ ਕਰਾਂ ਮੇਰੀ ਸਿਹਤ ਆਗਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦੀ, ਦੂਜੇ ਮੈਂ ਇਕੱਲਾ ਰਹਿ ਗਿਆ ਹਾਂ। ਮੈਂ ਰੋ-ਰੋ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਮਰ ਜਾਵਾਂਗਾ।'

ਇਸ ਪੱਤਰ ਦੇ ਮਿਲਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਕ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਬਾਅਦ ਮੈਂ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਗਿਆ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਬਚਨ ਬਿਲਾਸ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੈਂ ਆਖਿਆ, "ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਲੈ ਚਲੀਏ। ਗੱਡੀ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਲਵਾਂਗੇ, ਸਾਰੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਦਾ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਮੇਲਾ ਕਰਕੇ, ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ, ਸ਼ਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਆ ਜਾਵਾਂਗੇ।" ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਜਾਣਾ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਹੈ, ਮੇਰੀ ਬਿਮਾਰੀ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਹੈ, ਸਭ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਇਨਸਾਇਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਸਿਰੇ ਲੱਗ ਜਾਵੇ। ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਦੀ ਗਲ ਹੈ, ਨਾਲ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰ ਲੈ ਚੱਲਾਂਗੇ। ਬੋਲੇ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਹੈ। ਕੁਝ ਸਮਾਂ ਠਹਿਰ ਕੇ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗੇ, "ਸਾਡੇ ਘਰ ਗਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਰ (ਦਰਵਾਜ਼ਾ) ਬੰਦ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸੰਗਲੀ ਵਾਲਾ ਕੁੰਡਾ ਲੱਗਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਬਚਪਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਬਾਰ ਦੀ ਦੇਹਲੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਸੰਗਲੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੁੰਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਖੇਡਿਆ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਕੁੰਡੇ ਨੂੰ ਤਖ਼ਤੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਲਾਹ ਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਜਾਓ, ਬਸ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਕੁੰਡੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਹੋ ਜਾਣਗੇ।" ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਰੁਧਾਕੰਠ ਸਨ, ਅੱਖਾਂ ਗਿੱਲੀਆਂ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨ ਵੀ ਉਦਾਸ ਸੀ।

ਮੈਂ ਪਿੰਡ ਆ ਕੇ ਕੁਝ ਦਿਨ ਬਾਅਦ ਕੁੰਡਾ ਉਤਾਰ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਫ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਜਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਕੁੰਡਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪਰਮ-ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ ਹੋਏ। ਬੋਲੇ, "ਇਸ ਕੁੰਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਖੇਡਦਿਆਂ ਮੇਰਾ ਬਚਪਨ ਲੰਘਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕੁੰਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਆਰ ਹੈ। ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਸ਼ੈਅ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਅਟੁੱਟ ਪਿਆਰ ਹੈ। ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੁਪਨਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਸਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਹਾਨ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕੁੰਡੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਿਲ ਗਿਆ।"

ਹਵਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਟਿੱਪਣੀਆਂ

1. ਕਾਂਟੇ ਖੱਤਰੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਕੁਲਵੰਤ ਰਾਏ ਸੀ, ਅਵਿਵਾਹਿਤ ਸੀ। ਬਹੁਤਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਮੀਰਾਬ ਰਿਹਾ। ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਪੀ ਕੇ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਅੰਤ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਪਣੀ ਸਾਰੀ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਕੌਲ ਸਰ ਦਾਨ ਕਰ ਗਿਆ। ਮਿਹਰੇ ਦਾ ਨਾਉਂ ਸੋਢੀ ਮਿਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੀ। ਜੀਵਨ ਭਰ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਰਿਹਾ। ਬਲੋਅ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਚਲਾ ਗਿਆ।
2. ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਮਾਮਾ ਜੀ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਮਾਤਾ ਦੇ ਤਾਏ ਦੇ ਸਪੁੱਤਰ ਸਨ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਸਕਾ ਮਾਮਾ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਦੀ ਨਾਨੀ ਨੇ ਘਰ ਜੁਆਈ ਰੱਖ

ਲਿਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਵਸਨੀਕ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਨਕੇ ਸਨ, ਉੱਥੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਿੰਡ ਵੀ ਇਹੀ ਸੀ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਪਿਆਰ ਕੇਵਲ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਲ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਪਿੰਡ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਸਨ।

3. ਪੰਡਿਤ ਆਤਮਾ ਰਾਮ ਜੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਸਨ, ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰੈਮਰੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿਚ ਅਧਿਆਪਕ ਲੱਗੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ।

3

ਪ੍ਰੋ.ਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਰੀ ਨੇੜਤਾ (ਚਿੱਠੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਸਹਿਤ)

*ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ**

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਮਹਾਨ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਜਗਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਲੇਖਕ ਸਨ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਿਖੀਆਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੂਚੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਲੰਮੀ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪੰਜਵੀਂ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਤੇ ਲਿਖੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਥਾ ਅਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਤੀਸਰੀ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਤੇ ਲਿਖੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ 16 ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਮਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਈ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ *ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ* (ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼) ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਵਿਆਖਿਆਤ ਵੱਡ ਅਕਾਰੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਚਾਰ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ 2400 ਪੰਨਿਆ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਅਕਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ 3200 ਇੰਦਰਾਜ ਦਰਜ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਅਪੂਰਵ ਰਚਨਾ ਹੈ। ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸਣ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਜਿਸ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਆਪ 'ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਵਾਲੇ' ਨਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਹੋ ਗਏ।

ਆਪ ਜੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਮਾਣ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਝੋਲੀ ਭਰ ਕੇ ਲਿਆਏ ਸਨ। ਵਡੱਪਣ ਦਾ, ਪਦਵੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਤਿਆਗ਼ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਵੀ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਤਨੇ ਭਾਗਸ਼ੀਲ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਰਾਜੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਟਿਊਟਰ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ, ਗਿਆਨ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਰਾਜਕੁਮਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਣ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਾਣ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਪਰ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਮਨ, ਬਾਣੀ, ਕਰਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਤਿਆਗ਼ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਸਨ। '*ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ* ਲਿਖਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਰਬ ਪਦਵੀਆਂ ਤਿਆਗ਼ ਦਿੱਤੀਆ, ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਉਪ-ਕੁਲਪਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਉੱਚ ਅਹੁਦਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਸ ਹੋਈ। ਆਪ ਇਕੋ ਗੱਲ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ, 'ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ

* ਪਿੰਡ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ, ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ।

ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਵੱਡਾ ਅਹੁਦਾ ਨਹੀ।' ਇਹ ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਸੇਵਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਲਗੀਧਰ ਪਿਤਾ ਦਾ ਅਨਨਯ ਸਿੱਖ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਰਮ ਹਿਤੈਸ਼ੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ਸੀ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਬੜਾ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਅਕਸਮਾਤ, ਇਕ ਦਿਨ (ਸੰਨ 1958 ਨੂੰ) ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਘਰ ਆ ਗਏ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਭਰਾ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਪੁੱਤਰ ਨਿਰਪਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ (ਮੀਕਾ) ਨਾਲ ਸਨ। ਸ੍ਰ. ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਹਨ। ਮੈਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਛੋਟਾ ਭਰਾ ਹਾਂ, ਇਹ ਨਿਰਪਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਪੁੱਤਰ ਹਨ। ਮੇਰੇ ਦੋਨੋਂ ਹੱਥ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਜੁੜ ਗਏ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਉਚਾਰਨ ਹੋਇਆ, ਘਾਲ ਨ ਮਿਲਿਓ ਸੇਵ ਨ ਮਿਲਿਓ, ਮਿਲਿਓ ਆਇ ਅਚਿੰਤਾ॥ (ਗੁ.ਗ੍ਰੰ. ਪੰਨਾ 672)। ਮੇਰੇ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਪੰਗਤੀ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ ਹੋਏ।

ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ/ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੇ ਹਫ਼ਤਾਵਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਸਿਕ ਪੱਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਛਪਣ ਲੱਗੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਮੇਰੇ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਮੁੱਢਲਾ ਪੜਾਅ ਸੀ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਸੁੱਖ ਸਾਂਦ ਪੁੱਛਣ ਅਤੇ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀਆਂ ਪੁਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਯਾਦਾਂ ਤਾਜਾ ਕਰਨ ਤੋ ਬਾਅਦ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਵਾਰਤਾਲਾਪ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੀ, ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਅਣਛਪੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਮੰਗੀਆਂ। ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੁੱਢਲੇ ਪੜਾਅ ਦਾ ਲੇਖਕ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਕ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਅੱਗੇ ਝਿਜਕ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ-ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਕੁਝ ਅਣਛਪੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬੜੀ ਬਰੀਕੀ ਨਾਲ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ, "ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਿਆਰ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਮੁਤਾਬਕ ਬਹੁਤ ਤਸੱਲੀਬਖਸ਼ ਹੈ।" ਮੇਰੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ, ਹਿੰਦੀ, ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਬ੍ਰਜ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਨੋਟ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ, "ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਸਫਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਰੀ ਰੱਖੋ। ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਘਾਲਣਾ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨਿਚੋੜ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ, ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਨਾਲ ਸਨੇਹ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਲਈ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਹੋਣਗੇ।" ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਢਲੇ ਦੌਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੌਸਲਾ ਅਫ਼ਜਾਈ ਨੇ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਤਾਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਡੀ ਨੇੜਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਇਆ। ਮੇਰੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਤਾਂ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਕਾਲਜ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਸਨ। ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਵਾਰਤਾਲਾਪ ਲਈ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਟੈਲੀਫ਼ੋਨ ਜਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਸ੍ਰੋਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਦਾਨ-ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ-ਦੂਜੇ ਨੂੰ ਚਿੱਠੀ-ਪੱਤਰ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਹੋਈ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਸੰਨ 1960 ਤੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਸੈਕਟਰੀ ਬਣਨ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ। ਮੇਰੇ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਮੌਕਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸਖਸ਼ੀਅਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਘਟਨਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਜੋ ਲੇਖ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਅਖ਼ਬਾਰਾਂ,

ਮਾਸਿਕ ਪੱਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਛਪਦੇ ਸਨ ਉਹ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਗੋਚਰੇ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ ਬੈਠਕ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਇਹ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਲਈ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ *ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ* (ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਕੋਸ਼) ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੰਪਾਦਕ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਸੌਂਪੀ ਗਈ। ਇਸ ਸ਼ੁਭ ਕਾਰਜ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ 7-8 ਵਰਸ਼ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਗਿਆ, ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਿਤ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਗਿਆਨ ਕਾਰਣ ਕਾਰਜ਼ ਲੰਮਾ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਅਖ਼ੀਰਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੱਕ ਸੰਪਨ ਹੋਇਆ। ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਿਤ ਹਸਤੀਆਂ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਿਤ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਲੇਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਕਲਮ ਬੰਦ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ। 4000 ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਾਦਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦਿਆਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਚਿੱਠੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਰੱਖਿਆ। ਮੇਰੇ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਭੇਜੇ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਲੇਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ *ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ* ਵਿਚ ਥਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਥੋੜ੍ਹੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਪੱਤਰ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ, "ਇਸ ਲੇਖ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਭੇਜੋ।" ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਲੇਖਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਭੇਜੇ ਹੋਏ ਕਈ ਲੇਖ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕਤਾ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਪੱਤਰ ਸਮੇਤ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋਲ ਸੰਭਾਲੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ।

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪੰਜਵੀਂ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਤੀਸਰੀ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ 'ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ, ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ, ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਸ਼ੈਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਜੀਵਨੀਆਂ ਲਿਖੀਆਂ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ 'ਤੇ ਲਿਖੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ 16 ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਥਾ ਹਿੰਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਥਾ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਨਿਵਾਜਿਆ।

ਜਦੋਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ *ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ* ਸੰਪਾਦਤ ਕਰਨ ਲੱਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਯੋਗ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਕਾਰਜ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਇਕ ਪੱਤਰ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਮੇਰੀ ਹਿੰਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੇ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ/ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਭਾਲਕੇ ਪੂਰਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਭੇਜਣ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਲਾਈ। ਮੈਂ ਛੇ-ਸੱਤ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਲ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਲਿਖ ਕੇ ਭੇਜ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਵੇਰਵਾ ਮਿਲਣ ਤੇ 27 ਅਕਤੂਬਰ 1987 ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਪੱਤਰ ਆਇਆ:

ਪਿਆਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ,

ਆਪ ਦੇ ਸਨੇਹ-ਭਰਪੂਰ ਪੱਤਰ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਬਹੁਤ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ। ਇਹ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਲੱਭਣ ਹਿਤ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਬੜੀ ਖੇਚਲ ਕੀਤੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਰਿਣੀ ਹਾਂ। ਹੁਣ ਜਦ ਕਿਤੇ ਹਰਿਦੁਆਰ ਗਏ ਤਾਂ 'ਗੁਰਮੰਡਲਾਸ਼ਰਮ' ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪਤਾ ਕਰ ਲੈਣਾ। ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਆਉ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨਤਾ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।

ਡੂੰਘੇ ਸਨੇਹ ਸਹਿਤ,

ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਪਾਤਰ
ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ
ਐਡੀਟਰ-ਇਨ-ਚੀਫ਼

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਾ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਸਾਧੂ ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਵਾਂ, ਉਦਾਸੀਆਂ, ਨਿਰਮਲਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਮੇਲ ਦੇ ਸੋਢੀਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਧੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ, ਮਹਾਂਪੁਰਖਾਂ/ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਲੇਖ ਲਿਖਵਾਉਣ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਨਿਰਮਲ ਭੇਖ ਦੀਆਂ ਚਾਰ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦੀਆਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਲੇਖ ਲਿਖ ਕੇ ਭੇਜਣ ਲਈ 9 ਜੁਲਾਈ 1987 ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਪੱਤਰ ਭੇਜਿਆ:

ਪਿਆਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ,

ਕੁਝ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਲੇਖ ਲਿਖਣੇ ਹਨ। ਮੈਂ ਸੂਚੀ ਇਸ ਪੱਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਨੱਥੀ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ। ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਕਾਰਜ ਨੂੰ ਛੇਤੀ ਹੀ ਸਿਰੇ ਲਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਨਾ। ਮੈਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਪੱਤਰ ਦੀ ਉਡੀਕ ਕਰਾਂਗਾ।

ਡੂੰਘੇ ਸਨੇਹ ਸਹਿਤ,

ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਹਿਤਕਾਰੀ
ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ
ਐਡੀਟਰ-ਇਨ-ਚੀਫ਼

ਖੋਜ-ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੁਝੇਵਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਲਸ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਦੇ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਭੇਜਣ ਵਿਚ ਦੇਰ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਮੁੜ 9 ਸਤੰਬਰ 1987 ਨੂੰ ਪੱਤਰ ਆਇਆ ਕਿ ਜੋ ਲੇਖ ਲਿਖਣ ਲਈ ਪੱਤਰ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਹੈ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਛੇਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਛੇਤੀ ਲਿਖ ਕੇ ਭੇਜਣਾ। ਵੇਰਵਾ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਲਿਖਣਾ:

ਪਿਆਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ,

...ਇਸ ਪੱਤਰ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲੇਖਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਫਿਰ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਲੋਚਦਾ

ਹਾਂ। ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਚਾਰੇ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਲੇਖ ਸ਼ੀਘਰ ਹੀ ਭੇਜਣ ਦੀ ਖੇਚਲ ਕਰਨਾ। ਸਿਰਲੇਖ ਇੰਨ-ਬਿੰਨ ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਹੋਣ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਉਹ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਅੰਕਿਤ ਹਨ। ਇੱਕ ਗੱਲ ਹੋਰ। "ਗੁਰ ਬਿਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼" ਦਾ ਇਕ ਖਰੜਾ ਇਥੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੀ ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਹੈ।

ਸ਼ੁਭ ਇੱਛਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਨੇਹ ਸਹਿਤ,

ਆਪ ਦਾ ਹਿਤਕਾਰੀ
ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ
ਐਡੀਟਰ-ਇਨ-ਚੀਫ਼

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ 14 ਮਈ 1987 ਦੇ ਇਕ ਪੱਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਭੇਜੇ ਹੋਏ ਲੇਖ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਮੱਲਾ ਲੇਖ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਮੈਂ ਇਹ ਲੇਖ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਗੁੰਮ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਮੰਗਵਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ, ਇਸ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਖੇਦ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਮਾਨ ਸੰਤ ਅਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਮਸਤੂਆਣੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਲੇਖ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਕਰ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਿਮ੍ਰ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਖਿਮਾ ਜਾਚਨਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਪੱਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਲੇਖ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਾ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਹੋਏ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਤੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਤਗਿੱਯਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਵੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ, ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਮਹਾਂਪੁਰਖ, ਅਪੂਰਵ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ, ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਗਿਆਤਾ ਸਨ। ਪਿੰਡ ਨਾਂਗੇ ਦੀ ਸਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਵਿਚ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਗਦ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜਨਮ ਸਥਾਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਪੱਤਰ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਨੇ 14 ਮਈ 1987 ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਸੀ।

ਪਿਆਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ,

ਆਪ ਦਾ ਪੱਤਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਬਹੁਮੁੱਲਾ ਲੇਖ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਖੇਦ ਹੈ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਲੇਖ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਭੇਜਣਾ ਪਿਆ।

ਸੰਤ ਅਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਆਪ ਦਾ ਲੇਖ ਜਗ੍ਹਾ ਦੀ ਥੁੜ ਕਾਰਣ ਕੁਝ ਛੋਟਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਿਆ। ਆਸ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਆਪ ਖਿਮਾ ਬਖ਼ਸ਼ੋਗੇ।

ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਲੇਖ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਜੋ ਸਨੇਹ-ਭਰਪੂਰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਕਹੇ ਹਨ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਆਪ ਦੇ ਅਤਿ ਕ੍ਰਿਤਗਯ ਹਨ

ਡੂੰਘੇ ਸਨੇਹ ਸਹਿਤ,

ਆਪ ਦਾ ਹਿਤੂ
ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ
ਐਡੀਟਰ-ਇਨ-ਚੀਫ਼

ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਧੂ ਸਮਾਜ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਾਹਿੱਤ ਗੁਰਮਿਤ/ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਲੇਖ ਤਾਂ ਮੰਗਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਹੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਕਈ ਹੋਰ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਿਖੀਆਂ ਐਂਟਰੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋਲ ਤਸਦੀਕ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਮਾਲਵਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਲੇਖਕ ਸੰਤ ਵਸਾਖਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਕਿਸ਼ਨਪੁਰਾ ਕਲਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਐਂਟਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਤ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ 'ਨਰੋਤਮ' ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਐਂਟਰੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋਲ ਆਈਆਂ, ਪਰ ਮੈਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਬਸੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਠੀਕਰੀ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਐਂਟਰੀ ਦੇ ਪੱਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਥੇ ਅੰਕਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ।

ਮਾਣਯੋਗ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ,

ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਪੱਤਰ ਮਿਤੀ 1 ਦਸੰਬਰ 1984 ਮਿਲਿਆ। ਧੰਨਵਾਦ। ਪੰਡਿਤ ਬਸੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਠੀਕਰੀਵਾਲਾ ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਲੇਖ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਸਹਿਮਤੀ ਕਾਰਡ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧ ਹੈ। ਆਸ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਹਿਮਤੀ ਕਾਰਡ ਭਰ ਕੇ ਭੇਜ ਦੇਵੋਗੇ।

ਸਨੇਹ ਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਸਹਿਤ,

ਆਪ ਦਾ ਹਿਤੂ
ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਹਲੀ
ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਤੇ ਮੁਖੀ

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਭਰਾ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ 'ਉੱਪਲ' ਯੁਵਾ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ 30 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1987 ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚ ਖੰਡ ਸਿਧਾਰ ਗਏ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਆਪਸ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਮ-ਲਛਮਣ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਰਮ ਪਿਆਰ ਸੀ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਵਿਛੋੜਾ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਅਸਹਿ ਸੀ।

ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਰਾ ਵੀ ਅਤਿ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸੀ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਅਵਿਵਾਹਤ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਾਤਾ ਜੀ ਕੋਲ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਮੈਂ ਮਾਤਾ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਭੂਆ ਜੀ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਸਾਂ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਧੁਰ ਭਾਸ਼ੀ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਨ। ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਹਾਇਰ ਸੈਕੰਡਰੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਦੇ ਵਾਈਸ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਸਨ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਭੋਗ/ਅੰਤਿਮ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਦਾ ਦਿਨ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਅਥਾਹ ਇਕੱਠ ਹੋਇਆ। ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਹਾਇਰ ਸੈਕੰਡਰੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਦੇ ਸਟਾਫ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਰ-ਦੂਰ ਤੋਂ ਆਏ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਨਣ ਕੀਤਾ। ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਅਤੇ ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਂਜਲੀ

ਸਮਰਪਣ ਕੀਤੀ, ਕਿੰਤੂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਰਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਰੁਧਾਕੰਠ ਹਿੰਝੂ ਵਹਾਉਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਕੋਮਲ ਮਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਛੋਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਛੋਟੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਤੇ ਰੁਧਾਕੰਠ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਸ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਸ਼ੋਕ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਦਾ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਆਇਆ ਪੱਤਰ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੈ:

ਮੇਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ,

I seek leave to inform you that Bhog ceremony for the 4th death anniversary of my brother, Amar Singh, will take place in the morning of November 30, 1987, at Khalsa Higher Secondary School, Bhatinda.

With kindliest regards

Yours sincerely
Harbans Singh

ਜਿਵੇਂ ਮੈਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਭਰਾ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਅਕਹਿ ਪਿਆਰ ਸੀ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਸਨ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਮੈਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਲਿਖ ਆਇਆ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਹਾਇਰ ਸੈਕੰਡਰੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਦੇ ਵਾਈਸ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਇਮ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹਾਇਰ ਸੈਕੰਡਰੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਣੈ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਤਾਰੀਕ ਨਿਯਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਬਠਿੰਡੇ ਪੁੱਜ ਗਏ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਅਮਰਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ (ਹੁਣ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ) ਅਤੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਨ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਹਾਜ਼ਰੀ ਭਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਪੱਤਰ ਪੁੱਜ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਹਾਇਰ ਸੈਕੰਡਰੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਵਿਖੇ ਪੁੱਜ ਗਿਆ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸੈਂਕੜੇ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਲਿਉਂਣ ਲਈ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹਾ ਦਾਨ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹਾਇਰ ਸੈਕੰਡਰੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਤ੍ਵ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਦਾਨ, ਭਰਾ-ਪਿਆਰ, ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ, ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨਤਾ ਉੱਤੇ ਵਿਆਖਿਆਨ ਦਿੱਤੇ। ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਵੀ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਰੱਖੇ ਗਏ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਅਮਰਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ "ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ" ਦਾ ਉਦਘਾਟਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹਾ ਲੰਗਰ (ਚਾਹ) ਪਾਣੀ ਸਮੇਤ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਲਾ ਘਰ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਵਿਧੀ-ਵਤ ਲਿਖਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਘਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਇੱਛਾ ਹੈ

ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਰਤੇ, ਕੱਚਾ ਪਾਵੇ-ਪੱਕਾ ਪਾਵੇ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਵੇਚੇ, ਸਭ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਹਨ। ਲਿਖਤ ਬਤੌਰ ਸਰਪੰਚ ਦੇ ਮੈਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਹਸਤਾਖ਼ਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਸਨ। ਮਗਰੋਂ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਘਰ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਚ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਰਾਤ-ਦਿਨ ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਕਾਗਰ-ਚਿੱਤ ਲੱਗੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ, ਪਰ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਅਧਰੰਗ ਦਾ ਹਮਲਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਹੱਥ, ਪੈਰ, ਸਭ ਅੰਗ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨੋ ਹੱਟ ਗਏ ਪਰ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਨਾਲ 'ਦਿਮਾਗ' ਸਵਸਥ ਰਿਹਾ। ਸੁਰਤਿ, ਬੁੱਧੀ ਸਭ ਕਾਇਮ ਸੀ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਇਸ ਅਸਹਿ ਪੀੜਾ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਣ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ (ਭਾਵ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਹਰ ਐਂਟਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਖੋਜੀ ਨਿਰਣੈ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਟੈਨੋ ਟਾਈਪ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ), ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਖੜ੍ਹੋਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਣ ਦਿੱਤੀ।

ਮੈਂ, ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਗਿਆ, ਆਪ ਜੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ ਚਿੱਤ, ਮੁਸਕਰਾ ਕੇ ਮਿਲੇ। ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਚਿਰ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗੇ, "ਮੇਰਾ ਸਾਰਾ ਸਰੀਰ ਅਧਰੰਗ ਦੀ ਮਾਰ ਹੇਠ ਹੈ ਪਰ 'ਦਿਮਾਗ' ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਾਇਮ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਲਗੀਧਰ ਪਿਤਾ ਨੇ ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਪੂਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। 'ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ' ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਹੋਣ ਤੱਕ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨ, ਬੁਧਿ, ਚਿੱਤ (ਦਿਮਾਗ਼) ਇਸੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਵਸਥ ਰਹੇਗਾ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨਤਾਪੂਰਵਕ ਬਚਨ-ਬਿਲਾਸ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਮਨ ਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਕਸ਼ੋਭ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। 'ਬੀਜੀ' (ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ) ਅਤੇ ਡਾ. ਹਰਮਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਕੋਹਲੀ ਕੋਲ ਬੈਠੇ ਸਨ। ਸਭ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ ਮੁਦਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਮੇਰੀ ਇਕ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਹੈ, ਬੋਲੇ 'ਦੱਸੋ?' ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਕਿਹਾ, 'ਬੇਨਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁਕਮ ਕਰੋ।' ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਮੇਰੀ ਇੱਛਾ ਹੈ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਆਪਣੀ 'ਸਵੈ ਜੀਵਨੀ' ਲਿਖੋ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਕਈ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਮਿਲੇਗੀ। ਡਾ. ਹਰਮਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਹੱਸ ਕੇ ਕਿਹਾ, 'ਇਹ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ ਸਰ, ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਲਿਖੋ। ਇਸ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਵਿਚ 'ਬੀਜੀ' ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਆਵੇਗਾ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਮੇਰਾ ਨਾਮ ਵੀ ਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।' ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗੇ, 'ਮੇਰੀ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਨਹੀ, ਨਾਂ ਹੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਜੀਵਨੀ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਲਾਭ ਹੈ'। ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ, 'ਲਾਭ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀਯ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧੀ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਹੋਂ, ਕਿਤਨੇ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਕਿਤਨੇ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਆਖਿਆਨ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ, ਮਾਨ-ਸਨਮਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਇਕ ਨਿਵੇਕਲਾ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀਯ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਇਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਲਿਖਤੀ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰ ਦਿਉ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਮਿਲੇਗੀ।' ਪਰ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਮੁਸਕਰਾ ਕੇ ਗੱਲ ਮੁਕਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ।

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਥੋੜ੍ਹੇ ਦਿਨ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੀ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਲੇਖ ਡਾਕ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਇਆ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਯਾਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਰੋਚਿਕ ਸ਼ੈਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਵਰਨਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲੇਖ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ 'ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ' ਰੱਖਿਆ ਹੈ, ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਆਪ

ਜੀ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਪੱਤਰਕਾ 8 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1993 ਨੂੰ ਆਈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ, 'ਇਹ ਲੇਖ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਹੈ, ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਕਹਿਣ 'ਤੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲੇਖ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਸ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਵਰਤਣਾ ਚਾਹੋ, ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਸਰਬ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਹਨ (ਇਹ ਲੇਖ ਮੇਰੇ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ 'ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਗੋਰਵ ਗਾਥਾ' ਵਿਚ ਪੰਨਾ ਨੰ. 207 ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ)। ਪੱਤਰ ਦੇ ਹੇਠ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਤਾਂ ਛਪਿਆ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਹੇਠ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ, 'ਖਿਮਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਮੈਂ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਸਤਾਖ਼ਰ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਅਸਮਰੱਥ ਹਾਂ'।

ਮੇਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ,

ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਪੱਤਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਲੇਖ ਬਾਰੇ ਜੋ ਸਨੇਹ-ਭਰਪੂਰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਕਹੇ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ। ਇਹ ਲੇਖ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਕਹਿਣ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਿਆਲ ਆਇਆ। ਉਸੇ ਦਿਨ ਤੋਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਟਿਕੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਮੇਰਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸਿਰਲੇਖ 'ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ' ਹੀ ਸੀ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਜਿਸ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੋ, ਲੇਖ ਵਰਤ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ। ਆਪਣੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਚਾਹੋ ਵਰਤ ਲਓ।

ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਉਣ ਨੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨ ਸਦਾ ਹੀ ਲੋਚਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕੀ ਕਰਾਂ ਮੇਰੀ ਸਿਹਤ ਆਗਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦੀ। ਦੂਜੀ ਮੈਂ ਇਕੱਲਾ ਰਹਿ ਗਿਆ। ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਰੋ-ਰੋ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਮਰ ਜਾਵਾਂਗਾ।

ਆਪ ਦਾ ਹਿਤਕਾਰੀ
ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ
ਐਡੀਟਰ-ਇਨ-ਚੀਫ਼

(ਮੈਂ ਅਜੇ ਵੀ ਚਿੱਠੀ 'ਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਸਤਾਖ਼ਰ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਅਸਮਰੱਥ ਹਾਂ)

ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਲੇਖ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਪੱਤ੍ਰਿਕਾ 21 ਫਰਵਰੀ 1994 ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਲੇਖ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਧਾ-ਘਾਟਾ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਵੀ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਪੱਤਰ ਦੇ ਹੇਠ ਵੀ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ, 'ਖਿਮਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਸਤਾਖ਼ਰ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਅਸਮਰੱਥ ਹਾਂ'।

ਪਿਆਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ,

ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਉੱਪਰ ਲੇਖ ਲਿਖਵਾਇਆ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ। ਆਪ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਗਹੁ ਨਾਲ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਲੈਣਾ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਅਸ਼ੁੱਧੀਆਂ ਹੋਣ ਤਾਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਸੰਕੋਚ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੂਚਿਤ ਕਰਵਾਉਣਾ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਲੇਖ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਵਾਧ-ਘਾਟ ਕਰਨੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਨ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹ ਹੈ।

ਡੂੰਘੇ ਸਨੇਹ ਸਹਿਤ,

ਆਪ ਦਾ ਹਿਤਕਾਰੀ
ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ
ਐਡੀਟਰ-ਇਨ-ਚੀਫ਼

ਜਿਵੇਂ ਮੈਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਬੀਮਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਅਕਹਿ ਅਸਹਿ ਪੀੜਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਤ-ਦਿਨ ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਰੁੱਝੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਵਾਚਸਪਤੀ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਭੁੱਲੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਬੀਜੀ (ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ) ਭਾਮਤੀ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਸਥਿਤ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਪਰ ਈਸ਼ਵਰ ਹੋਰ ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਬੀਬੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਜੀ 12 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1992 ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚ-ਖੰਡ ਸਿਧਾਰ ਗਏ। ਇਹ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਲਈ ਅਕਹਿ ਸਦਮਾ ਸੀ। ਬੀਬੀ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਅਰਦਾਸ 22 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1992 ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਰੱਖੀ ਗਈ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦਾ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਸ਼ੋਕ ਪੱਤਰ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਗਿਆ, ਜਿਸਦਾ ਉਤਾਰਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ:

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ

ਜੋ ਮਨਿ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਚੇਤੇ ਸਨਿ ਸੋ ਗਾਲੀ ਰਬ ਕੀਆਂ

My beloved wife, Kailash Kaur, passed away suddenly on November 12, 1982. Bhog ceremonies for the departed soul will take place on Sunday, November 22, 1992, from 12.30 p.m. to 1.30 p.m. at Gurdwara Sahib, Punjabi University Campus, Patiala.

Dr. Nripinder Singh (Son)	Harbans Singh
Sukhninder Kaur (Daughter-in-Law)	A-1, Punjabi University
Dr. Guninder Kaur (Daughter)	Patiala
Jagjit Singh Bawa (Brother)	
Bhupinderjit Singh Bawa (Brother)	

ਬੀਬੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਜੀ ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਰਬ ਨਾਲ ਸਹਾਨਭੂਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ, ਸਰਬ ਨੂੰ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ, ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਕਾਰ ਰੂਪ ਸਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਰਵਾਜ਼ੇ ਸਭ ਦੀ ਆਓ ਭਗਤ/ਸੇਵਾ ਲਈ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। 'ਬੀਬੀ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਲੰਗਰ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਤੁੱਟ ਚਲਦਾ ਸੀ। ਆਪ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹਾ-ਡੁੱਲ੍ਹਾ ਵਰਤਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਕੋਮਲ ਮਨ ਵਾਲੇ, ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ, ਪਰਮ ਆਤਮਾ ਸਨ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਮਿੱਤਰਾਂ, ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਕਾਂ, ਸਾਹਿਤਕਾਰਾਂ, ਅਫ਼ਸਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਘੇਰਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਸੀ। ਬੀਬੀ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਹਿਰਦਾ ਵੀ ਮਹਾਨ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੱਗੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ।

ਬੀਬੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਜੀ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਤਨ-ਮਨ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ-ਭਗਤੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਪਤੀ-ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੱਤਪਰ ਰਹੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਕਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾ ਸਕਣ। ਉਹ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ

ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਰਹੇ। ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੰਪਤੀ (ਪਤੀ-ਪਤਨੀ) ਇਸ ਕਾਰਜ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਇਤਨੀ ਲਗਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਕਾਗਰ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਕੇਵਲ ਇਸੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ।

2 ਮਈ 1994 ਨੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਪੁੱਤਰ ਜਗਰੂਪ ਸਿੰਘ 40 ਵਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਆਯੂ ਵਿਚ ਅਚਾਨਕ ਅਕਾਲ ਚਲਾਣਾ ਕਰ ਗਿਆ। ਜਗਰੂਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਿਮਰ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਵਾਲਾ ਮਿਲਣਸਾਰ ਗ੍ਰੈਜੁਏਟ, ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਦਾ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਸੀ। ਜਗਰੂਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਦਾ ਜਦੋਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਾ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਘੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਪੱਤਰ ਆਇਆ:

ਮੇਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ,

ਬੜੀ ਜ਼ਹਿਰੀ ਕਹਿਰੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਵਾਪਰੀ ਹੈ। ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅਤੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਬਖ਼ਸ਼ਣ, ਇਹੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਹੈ।

ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਹਿਤਕਾਰੀ
ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ

ਸੰਨ 1980 ਈ. ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਸ੍ਰੀਮਾਨ ਸੰਤ ਅਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਮਸਤੂਆਣੇ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਥਾ 'ਅਗਮ ਅਗਾਧ ਪੁਰਖ' ਨਾਮ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੀ। ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੋਲ ਮੁਖਬੰਦ ਲਿਖਵਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕੀਤੀ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਫਰਮਾਇਆ, "ਮੈਂ ਲਿਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਲਿਖਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਰਾ ਇਕਰਾਰ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਹੋਰ ਲਿਖਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਾਂਗਾ।" ਜਦ ਮੇਰੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਛਪ ਕੇ ਆਈ ਮੈਂ ਭੇਟ ਕਰਨ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ ਬੜੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ ਹੋਏ, ਬੋਲੇ, "ਮੈਂ ਸਾਰਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਪੂਰਵਕ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਂਗਾ।"

ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਹਿਣ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਾਰਾ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਧਿਆਨ ਪੂਰਬਕ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ। ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਕਈ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਮਾਨ ਸੰਤ ਅਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਮਸਤੂਆਣੇ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ 'ਹਜ਼ੂਰ' ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ। ਕੁਝ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਮੈਂ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਿਆ, ਬੋਲੇ 'ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਾ ਯੋਗ ਹੈ। ਫਿਰ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗੇ, 'ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸੰਤ ਜੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ' ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਯੋਗ ਨਹੀ, ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ 'ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸੰਤ ਜੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ' ਸ਼ਬਦ ਲਿਖਣਾ ਯੋਗ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਖਿਮਾ ਮੰਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਅਗਲੇ ਸੰਸਕਰਣ ਵਿਚ ਸੋਧ ਕਰਾਂਗਾ। ਸੋ ਅਗਲੇ ਐਡੀਸ਼ਨ ਵਿਚ ਸੋਧ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰੀ 'ਅਗਮ ਅਗਾਧ ਪੁਰਖ' ਡਾ. ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦਾ ਰੀਵਿਊ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਿਹਾ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਡਾ. ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਤੋਂ ਛਪਦੇ 'ਕੌਮੀ ਏਕਤਾ' ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦਾ ਰਿਵਿਊ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਰਿਵਿਊ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਕਾਪੀ ਭੇਜ ਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਨਿਵਾਜਿਆ, ਜੋ ਹੁਣ ਵੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋਲ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਕੇ ਰੱਖੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਇਨਸਾਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਐਡੀਸ਼ਨ

ਵਿਚ ਪੰਨਾ 212 'ਤੇ (ਅਨੁਵਾਦਤ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਕੋਸ਼ ਦੇ ਪੰਨਾ 102 'ਤੇ) ਸੰਤ ਅਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਸਤੂਆਣਾ ਐਂਟਰੀ ਵਿਚ 'ਅਗਮ ਅਗਾਧ ਪੁਰਖ' ਦਾ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਵੀ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਮੈਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਚਿੱਠੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੱਤਰ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋਲ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੰਖਿਆ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੱਤਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਨੇੜ੍ਹਤਾ, ਪ੍ਰੇਮ, ਪਿਆਰ, ਸਹਾਨਭੂਤੀ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਪੱਤਰ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਹੀ ਨਹੀ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਵੀ ਹਨ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੱਤਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਨੇੜਤਾ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੱਤਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਬਾਰੇ, ਜਿਥੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੱਤਰ ਭੇਜੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪੱਤਰ ਭੇਜ ਕੇ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਵਿਖੇ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਨ ਆਏ, ਜਿਥੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਅਮਰਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਮਹਾਨ ਭਾਵ ਨਾਲ ਆਏ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਤਰ ਭੇਜ ਕੇ ਬੁਲਾਏ ਵੀ, ਇਸ ਵਿੱਦਿਅਕ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਬੁਲਾ ਕੇ ਨਿਵਾਜਿਆ। ਬੀਬੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪੱਤਰ ਭੇਜਿਆ। ਮੇਰੇ ਸਪੁੱਤਰ (ਜਗਰੂਪ ਸਿੰਘ) ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੱਤਰ ਭੇਜ ਕੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਦੁੱਖ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਏ। ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ (ਜਗਰੂਪ ਸਿੰਘ) ਬਾਰੇ ਸ਼ੋਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਜਗਰੂਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ, ਗੁਣ ਔਗੁਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨੇਤਰ ਗਿੱਲੇ ਹੋਏ, ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਤੇ ਰੁਮਾਲ ਫੇਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੋ ਸਨੇਹ ਅਪਣੱਤ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ ਉਹ ਕੇਵਲ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ। ਕਹਿਬੇ ਕਉ ਸੋਭਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਖਾ ਹੀ ਪਰਵਾਨੁ॥ (ਗੁ.ਗ੍ਰੰ., ਪੰਨਾ 1370)। ਮਹਾਨ ਆਤਮਾ ਸਨ।

ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਨਹਿ ਕੋਊ ਜਾਨੈ॥ (ਗੁ.ਗ੍ਰੰ., ਪੰਨਾ-537) ਦੇ ਕਥਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਉੱਚ ਆਚਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ, ਸਭ ਨਾਲ ਸਹਾਨਭੂਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ, ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਨਿੱਤਨੇਮੀ, ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ, ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ-ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਅਨਨਯ ਸਿੱਖ, ਸ਼੍ਰੇਸ਼ਟ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੂਰਨ, ਪਿਛਲੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਦੁਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਘਿਰ ਗਏ। ਭਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਪਤਨੀ ਸਵਰਗ ਸਿਧਾਰ ਗਏ, ਆਪ ਅਧਰੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਗ੍ਰੱਸੇ ਗਏ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀਕਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਆਰੰਭੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਵਿਚ ਯਤਨਸ਼ੀਲ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਭਾਣੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਟੱਲ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਰਹੇ।

ਜਦ ਵੀ ਮੈਂ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਵੇਖਣ ਸਾਰ ਹੰਝੂ ਕੇਰ ਕੇ ਦੋ ਤਿੰਨ ਮਿੰਟ ਰੋਂਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਵਾਸਤਵ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਿਲਣ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਸਾਰਾ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਮਾਤਾ-ਪਿਤਾ, ਮਿੱਤਰ-ਪਿਆਰੇ, ਬਚਪਨ, ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਕਾਲ, ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀਆਂ ਗਲੀਆਂ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਯਾਦ ਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਅਕਹਿ ਪਿਆਰ ਸੀ। ਦੋ ਤਿੰਨ ਮਿੰਟਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸਾਵਧਾਨ

ਹੋ ਕੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਬਚਨ ਬਿਲਾਸ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਕਰੁਣਾਮਈ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਹੋਰ ਸਭ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਸਨ। ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਕੇਵਲ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ, ਅਜਿਹਾ ਲੱਗਦਾ 'ਪੂਰਬ ਜਨਮ ਕੇ ਮਿਲੇ ਸੰਜੋਗੀ॥' (ਗੁ.ਗ੍ਰੰ., ਪੰਨਾ 700)। ਇਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੱਕ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਦਾ ਪਾਤਰ ਬਣਾਇਆ। ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਾਨ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰਨ ਆਏ ਸਨ, ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਨ ਆਏ ਸਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਦਾ ਜਸ ਲਿਖ ਕੇ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਲ ਅਭੇਦ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਸਨ।

> ਸੂਰਜ ਕਿਰਣਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਜਲ ਕਾ ਜਲੁ ਹੂਆ ਰਾਮ॥
> ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲੀ ਸੰਪੂਰਨੁ ਥੀਆ ਰਾਮ॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ 846

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ਅਸਾਧਾਰਣ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ

*ਡਾ. ਰਤਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੱਗੀ**

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਡਾ. ਰਤਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੱਗੀ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਲੇਖ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੌਰਾਨ 1992 ਵਿਚ ਛਪਿਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਮੂਲ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇੱਥੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਖ਼ੁਸ਼ੀ ਲਈ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਧਨਾ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਅਸਾਧਾਰਣ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਵਜੋਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਉਲੇਖਯੋਗ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਾਲੀਨ, ਮਿੱਠ-ਬੋਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਰੁਚੀਆਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ-ਬ੍ਰਿਤਾਂਤ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ ਦੇ ਸਨਮੁਖ ਲਿਆ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਮਾਧਿਅਮ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਅਨੇਕ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਲੇਖਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਚਿਤ ਕਰਾਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕਾਰਜ ਵੱਲ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਰੁਚਿਤ ਹੋਏ ਕਿ ਪਰਤ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੱਕਿਆ।

ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਸਾਹਿਤ-ਸੇਵੀ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਸੰਨ 1921 ਵਿਚ ਹੋਇਆ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ 1943 ਈ. ਵਿਚ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਤੋਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਵਿਚ ਐਮ.ਏ. ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਖਿਆ ਪਾਸ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਇੱਥੇ ਹੀ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਲੈਕਚਰਾਰ ਲੱਗ ਗਏ। ਉੱਥੇ ਇਕ ਸਾਲ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਨ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਨਿਯੁਕਤੀ ਬਰਜਿੰਦਰਾ ਕਾਲਜ, ਫ਼ਰੀਦਕੋਟ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਮੁਖੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਹੋ ਗਈ। 14 ਸਾਲਾ ਬਾਅਦ ਉਹ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਕਾਲਜ, ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਲੱਗੇ। ਸੰਨ 1960 ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰ-ਸਕੱਤਰ ਨਾਮਜ਼ਦ ਹੋਏ ਅਤੇ 1962 ਵਿਚ ਇਸੇ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ ਬਣੇ। ਇਸੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਉਹ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਗਏ। ਉਥੋਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕੀ ਢਾਂਚਾ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਚੰਗੇ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਲਈ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕੀਤਾ। ਹਾਰਵਰਡ ਆਦਿ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਲੈਕਚਰ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿਦਵਤਾ ਦੀ ਧਾਕ ਬਿਠਾਈ।

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* ਪਟਿਆਲਾ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀਆਂ ਦਰਜਨ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖੀਆਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁੱਧ ਨੁਹਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਸ਼ੈਲੀ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਲੇਖਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਲੇਖਕਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਵੀ ਮਯਾਰੀ ਮਾਪਦੰਡ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤੇ। ਯੂਰਪ ਅਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਵਿਦਵਤਾਪੂਰਣ ਭਾਸ਼ਣਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੱਚੀ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ੰਸਾ ਹਾਸਲ ਕੀਤੀ।

ਪਿਛਲੇ ਤੀਹ ਵਰ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਉੱਤੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਚਾਰ ਜਿਲਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਛਪਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਇਸ ਕੋਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਗਪਗ ਚਾਰ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਇੰਦਰਾਜ਼ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਹੈ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਜਿਲਦ ਦੇ ਜਲਦੀ ਹੀ ਛਪ ਕੇ ਬਾਹਰ ਆ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਜਿਲਦ ਵੀ ਇਸੇ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਤੀਕ ਛਪ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਆਸ ਹੈ। ਕੋਸ਼ ਦੇ ਇੰਦਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਬੜੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਰੀਕੀ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੁਣ ਤੀਕ ਅਣਗੌਲੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਇੰਦਰਾਜ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰਨ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਉਚੇਰੀ ਰੁਚੀ ਵਿਖਾਈ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਹਰ ਇੰਦਰਾਜ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ-ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਗ ਤੋਂ ਲਿਖਵਾ ਕੇ ਫਿਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ-ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਗ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਸੁਧਵਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸਾਰੇ ਇੰਦਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਰੂਪ ਦੇਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਖੁਦ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਇਕ-ਇਕ ਤੱਥ ਨੂੰ ਬੜੀ ਸਾਵਧਾਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਪਰਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਘੋਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸਾਰੇ ਇੰਦਰਾਜ ਆਕਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਬ੍ਰਿਤਾਂਤ-ਸੰਯੋਜਨ ਤੱਕ ਇਕ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਵਿਧੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਢਾਲੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਫਲਸਰੂਪ ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਸਹੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਉਪਲਬਧੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਮਾਧਿਅਮ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਭਰੋਸੇਯੋਗ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ-ਭਰ ਦੇ ਅਰਜਿਤ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਤੱਤ-ਸਾਰ ਇਸ ਕੋਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਆਪ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਚਲਦੇ ਫਿਰਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਾਕਾਰ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੱਚਮੁੱਚ ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਨੁਹਾਰ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਕ ਨਿਸ਼ਠਾਵਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਮਰਯਾਦਾਵਾਦੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਇਕ ਸੱਚੇ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਵੇਦਨਸ਼ੀਲ ਵਿਚਾਰਕ ਹਨ। ਧਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧੀ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ-ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਨਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਆਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹੀ ਕਾਰਣ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਾਈਸ-ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਦੇ ਅਹੁਦੇ ਦੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਨੂੰ ਤਰਜੀਹ ਦਿੱਤੀ।

ਰੱਬ ਕਰੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਲੰਮੀ ਉਮਰ ਹੋਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਦਵਤਾਪੂਰਣ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹਿਣ।

ਸੋਵੀਨਰ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ
1992

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ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ

*ਬ੍ਰਹਮਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ**

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਰੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ 1959 ਵਿਚ ਹੋਈ। ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਉਹ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਕਾਲਜ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਸਨ। ਮੇਰਾ ਖ਼ਿਆਲ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਕੋਈ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਹੋਣਗੇ ਪਰ ਜਦੋਂ ਮੇਰੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ ਹੋਈ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਪੈਂਤੀ-ਛੱਤੀ ਵਰ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਦੀ ਕੁਰਸੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਸਸ਼ੋਭਿਤ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਬੜਾ ਹੈਰਾਨ ਹੋਇਆ। ਫਿਰ ਮੈਂ ਇਸੇ ਕਾਲਜ ਵਿਚ ਐਫ.ਐਸ.ਸੀ. ਦਾ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਰਣਧੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੰਦ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੁਲਸ਼ਨ (ਹੁਣ ਚਮਨ) ਮੇਰੇ ਸੀਨੀਅਰ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਸੇ ਕਾਲਜ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਵੱਡਾ ਮੁਸ਼ਾਇਰਾ ਵੀ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਡਾ. ਰਣਧੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੰਦ, ਸੁਰਜੀਤ ਰਾਮਪੁਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਡਾ. ਜਗਤਾਰ ਵਰਗੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਿਰਕਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ।

1960 ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਦੀ ਰੂਪ-ਰੇਖਾ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋਣ ਲੱਗੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਾਜੈਕਟ ਦਾ ਸਕੱਤਰ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। 1962 ਵਿਚ ਜਦੋਂ ਇਹ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਬਣ ਗਈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਹੋਏ। 1963 ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਰਪ੍ਰਸਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਜਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਿਆ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਬੇਟਾ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਨ੍ਰਿਪਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਐਮ.ਏ. ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਗੁਰਭਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੀ ਇਸੇ ਬੈਚ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੀ ਐਮ.ਏ. ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ, ਹਾਲਾਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਲੱਗਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਕੁਝ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਭਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਤੋਂ ਮੋਹ ਭੰਗ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕਿਆ ਸੀ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਨ੍ਰਿਪਿੰਦਰ ਤਾਂ ਐਮ.ਏ. ਕਰਨ ਸਾਰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵੱਲ ਰਵਾਨਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਗੁਰਭਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੁਝ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਠਹਿਰ ਕੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਉਥੋਂ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਪੀ.ਐਚ.ਡੀ. ਕਰ ਕੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ਡਾ. ਅਮਰੀਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ

* ਫ਼ਰੀਦਕੋਟ।

ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੇਟੇ ਨ੍ਰਿਪਿੰਦਰ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਮੋਟ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕਦੇ ਕੋਈ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕੀਤੀ। ਕੁਝ ਵਰ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਬੇਟੀ ਨਿੱਕੀ ਗੁਨਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ ਵੀ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਗਈ। ਅੱਜ ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਉਹ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੇਂ-ਸਮੇਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਣ ਕਰਦੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੁਨੱਖੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਜੀਲੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਸਨ। ਉਹ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਡਬਲ-ਬਰੈਸਟਿਡ ਸੂਟ ਪਹਿਨਿਆ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਗੜੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਰੰਗਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪਗੜੀ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਣ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੈਲੀ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਮੁਤਾਸਿਰ ਸੀ। 1962 ਤੋਂ 1965 ਤੱਕ ਉਹ ਡਾ. ਭਾਈ ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਰਹੇ ਜੋ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਵਾਈਸ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਸਨ। ਸ਼ਾਮ ਦੇ ਪੰਜ ਵਜਦਿਆਂ ਹੀ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੈਰ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਵਾਇਤੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਾਕ ਕੁੜਤੇ ਅਤੇ ਚੂੜੀਦਾਰ ਪਜਾਮੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸੂਟ ਵਿਚ। ਸੈਰ ਦਾ ਵਕਤ ਏਨਾ ਨਿਯਮਿਤ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕਈ ਲੋਕ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਾਹਮਣਿਉਂ ਗੁਜ਼ਰਦਿਆਂ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ ਘੜੀਆਂ ਸੈੱਟ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਬਾਰਾਂਦਰੀ ਬਾਗ਼ ਵਿਚ ਸਥਿਤ ਸੀ। ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਸੇ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਉਪਰਲੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ ਵਿਚ ਰਿਹਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਹਰ ਵਾਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਨਵੀਂ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਪਰਤਿਆ। 1965 ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ੋਲੋਖੋਵ ਨੂੰ ਨੋਬਲ ਪ੍ਰਾਈਜ਼ ਮਿਲਣ ਉੱਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਗੋਸ਼ਟੀ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਗੁਰਬਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਾਲਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਡਾ. ਅਮਰੀਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਰਗੇ ਕਈ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਸ਼ੋਲੋਖੋਵ ਦੀ ਨਾਵਲ ਕਲਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵਿਅਕਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਸਨ। 1966 ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਐਮ.ਏ. ਕਰ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਹੁਣ ਅਸੀਂ ਲੋਕ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਤੀਸ ਮਾਰ ਖ਼ਾਂ ਸਮਝਣ ਲੱਗੇ। ਐਮ.ਏ. ਕਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੈਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਚਿਤ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਿਕ ਪੁਸਤਕ *ਆਸਪੈਕਟਸ ਆਫ਼ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਲਿਟਰੇਚਰ* ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਹੀ ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਤੋਂ ਕਾਫੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਵੀ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। 1966-67 ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੁਲਨਾਤਮਕ ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਬਾਰੇ ਮੋਨੋਗ੍ਰਾਫ਼ ਲਿਖੇ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਇਆ। ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਰਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਰਿਹਾ।

1974-75 ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ *ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਿਇਜ਼ਮ* ਉੱਤੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਵੀਹ ਵਰ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਕਠਿਨ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਸ ਕੰਮ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਕੰਮਲ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ। 'ਸੇਵਕ ਕੀ ਓੜਕ ਨਿਬਹੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ' ਦੇ ਗੁਰਵਾਕ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਾਜੈਕਟ ਦੇ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਹੋਣ ਤੱਕ ਆਪ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਚੇਤੰਨ ਬਾਖ਼ਬਰ ਅਤੇ ਇਕਾਗਰ-ਚਿੱਤ ਰਹੇ। ਇਸ

ਅਰਸੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਇਕ ਨਾਖ਼ੁਸ਼ਗਵਾਰ ਹਾਦਸੇ ਵੀ ਵਾਪਰੇ। ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਾਥ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਸੁਸ਼ੀਲ ਪਤਨੀ ਸਰਦਾਰਨੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਵੀ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਥ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਪੁਰੀ ਸਿਧਾਰ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਬੇਟਾ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਟੀ ਵੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੂਰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਵਾਸ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਕੁਝ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਅਧਰੰਗ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਹਮਲਾ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਚਲਣਾ-ਫਿਰਨਾ ਲਗਪਗ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਉਮੰਗ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਗੇ ਤੋਂ ਅਗੇਰੇ ਤੋਰੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ:

ਸੀਨੇ ਖਿੱਚ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਖਾਧੀ
ਉਹ ਕਰ ਆਰਾਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਹਿੰਦੇ
ਨਿਹੁੰ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੈਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਨੀਂਦਰ
ਉਹ ਦਿਨੇ ਰਾਤ ਪਏ ਵਹਿੰਦੇ
ਇਕੋ ਲਗਨ ਲਗੀ ਲਈ ਜਾਂਦੀ
ਹੈ ਟੋਰ ਅਨੰਤ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ,
ਵਸਲੋਂ ਉਰੇ ਮੁਕਾਮ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ
ਸੋ ਚਾਲ ਪਏ ਨਿਤ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਕ ਸੌਂਦਰਯ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀ ਚਿੰਤਕ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਸੌਂਦਰਯ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣੀਕ ਨਮੂਨਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਗੁਣ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਨੋਦੀ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਘਰ-ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਬੜਾ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਹੱਸਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਛੋਟੀਆਂ ਛੋਟੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ੂਬ ਹਸਾਇਆ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਮੰਚ ਤੋਂ ਅਲੋਪ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਇਕ ਬਹੁਤ ਵੱਡਾ ਖ਼ਲਾਅ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਈ ਵਾਰੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦਾ ਵਾਈਸ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਬਣਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਸ਼ਾਂ ਵੀ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਿਆਣੇ ਆਦਮੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਸੁਝਾ ਕੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਖਹਿੜਾ ਛੁਡਾ ਲਿਆ। ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਮਹੱਤਵਕਾਂਖੀ ਅਤੇ ਖ਼ੁਸ਼ਾਮਦੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਭੀੜ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਰਗੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਸੌਖਿਆਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਭਦੇ ਜੋ ਇਹ ਕਹਿ ਸਕਣ:

ਮੇਰੀ ਛਿਪੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਚਾਹ
ਤੇ ਛਿਪ ਟੁਰ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ
ਹਾਇ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਨਾਂਹ
ਮੈਂ ਤਰਲੇ ਲੈ ਰਿਹਾ।

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਟ੍ਰਿਬਿਊਨ
7 ਜੂਨ 1998

6
ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਆਖ਼ਰੀ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ

*ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ 'ਚਮਨ'**

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਿਸੇ ਜਾਣ-ਪਛਾਣ ਦੇ ਮੁਥਾਜ ਨਹੀਂ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਾਉਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਨਾਲ ਇਉਂ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਜਿਉਂ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦਾ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਨਾਲ। ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਦਾ ਕੱਦ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਨਾਲ ਉੱਚਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦਾ ਆਰੰਭਕ ਯੁੱਗ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਯੁੱਗ ਹੈ। ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਲਈ ਬਣਾਈ ਗਈ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਉਹ ਸੈਕਟਰੀ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਹੋਏ। ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਵਾਈਸ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਦਾ ਦਫ਼ਤਰੀ ਜਿਹਾ ਅਹੁਦਾ ਨਾ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਕੇ ਸਗੋਂ ਇਕ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਵਰਗਾ ਖੋਜ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਕੰਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇ *ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ* ਵਰਗਾ ਔਖਾ ਕੰਮ ਸਿਰੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਾਇਆ। ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਨਸਲਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਰਿਣੀ ਰਹਿਣਗੀਆਂ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਦੋਂ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਕਾਲਜ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਸਨ, ਮੈਂ ਉੱਥੇ 1960 ਤਕ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਸਾਂ। ਉਨਾਂ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ ਤੋਂ ਅਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਹੋਇਆ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਦੋ-ਤਿੰਨ ਵਾਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਮਿਲਣ ਦਾ ਅਵਸਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਇਆ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਦੋ-ਤਿੰਨ ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਅਧਰੰਗ ਦੀ ਬਿਮਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਪੀੜਤ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖਣ ਦੀ ਤੀਬਰ ਇੱਛਾ ਹੋਰ ਵਧੀ ਜਦ ਡੇਢ ਕੁ ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ *ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਰੰਗ-ਰੰਗੀਲੀ* ਭੇਜੀ। ਉੱਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਦੋ-ਤਿੰਨ ਸਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਛੋਟੀ ਜਿਹੀ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਆਈ ਜੋ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਅੰਤਲੀ ਲਾਈਨ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੌਂਗਟੇ ਖੜ੍ਹੇ ਕਰ ਗਈ, ਲਿਖਿਆ ਸੀ '...ਇਹ ਮੇਰੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਠਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਬਗੈਰ ਦਸਤਖ਼ਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਭੇਜ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ।' ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੁਣ ਦਸਤਖ਼ਤ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਅਸਮਰੱਥ ਹਨ, ਇਹ ਮੇਰੇ ਲਈ ਬੜੀ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਗੱਲ ਸੀ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਲਿਖਾਈ ਦਾ ਮੈਂ ਕਾਲਜ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਸ਼ੈਦਾਈ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਬਹੁਤ ਖੁਸ਼ਖਤ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਹ ਬਗੈਰ ਪੈੱਨ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਗੋਲ-ਗੋਲ ਅੱਖਰ ਇਉਂ-ਵਾਹੁੰਦੇ

* ਮੁਕਤਸਰ।

ਸੀ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਹਲਵਾਈ ਜਲੇਬੀਆਂ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਸਤਾਖ਼ਰ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਮਨ ਹੀ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਗਰਮ-ਗਰਮ ਤੇ ਮਿੱਠੀਆਂ-ਮਿੱਠੀਆਂ ਜਲੇਬੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਸੁਆਦ ਆਉਣ ਲੱਗਦਾ। ਸੁੰਦਰ ਲਿਖਣਾ ਇਕ ਖੂਬੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਵੱਡੇ-ਵੱਡੇ ਲੇਖਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਦੀ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਲੇਖਕ ਸ. ਖੁਸ਼ਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੁਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਚਿੱਠੀਆਂ ਮੈਂ ਚਾਰ-ਪੰਜ ਵਾਰ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਮਤਲਬ ਸਮਝ ਸਕਿਆ ਹਾਂ। ਮੈਂ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਕਈ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ, ਜੋ ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ’ਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਕੂਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ, ਦੀ ਲਿਖਾਈ ਐਨੀ ਚੰਗੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਵੇਖੀ। ਮੇਰਾ ਕਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਮਤਲਬ ਐਡੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਲੇਖਕ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਲਿਖਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਇਕ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਦੇਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਐਨਾ ਅੱਛਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਸਨ ਹੁਣ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਸਤਖ਼ਤ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ। ਇਸ ਮਜਬੂਰੀ ਅੱਗੇ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਕਿੰਨਾ ਬੇਵੱਸ ਹੈ। ਬਚਪਨ, ਜਵਾਨੀ, ਬੁਢਾਪਾ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਉਸ ਉੱਪਰ ਇਹ ਲਾਚਾਰੀ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਕਿੱਥੋਂ ਤੋਰ ਕੇ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਲਿਆ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਇਕ ਰਹੱਸ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਝ ਸਕਿਆ।

ਪਿਛਲੇ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਮੈਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਗਿਆ। ਦਸਤਕ ਦਿੱਤੀ, ਅੱਗੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੇਟੀ ਗੁਨਿੰਦਰ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੈਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵੇਰ ਦੇਖਿਆ, ਨੇ ਦਰਵਾਜ਼ਾ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਿਆ ਫਿਰ ਮਿਸ਼ਰਾ ਜੀ ਮਿਲੇ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ’ਚ ਹਨ, ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਮੈਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ ਵੇਖਿਆ। ਉਹ ਮੇਰਾ ਕਾਰਡ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ ਗਏ ‘ਅੱਛਾ!’ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਜਿਹੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਵੀ ਆਈ ਸੀ। ਸੁੰਦਰ ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੀ... ਮਿਸ਼ਰਾ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਮੂੰਹੋਂ ਇਹ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਗਦ-ਗਦ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ’ਚ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਤੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਨੂੰ ਡੇਢ ਸਾਲ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਯਾਦ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ ਇਹ ਮੇਰੇ ਲਈ ਬੜੇ ਸੁਭਾਗ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਅੰਦਰ ਗਏ ਤੇ ਝਟ ਹੀ ਬਾਹਰ ਆ ਗਏ ਤੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਮਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲਣ ਲਈ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਮੈਂ ਨਾਲ ਦੇ ਕਮਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਗਿਆ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਰਦੀ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਰਜਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਲੇਟੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਮੈਂ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਜਾਈ ‘ਚੋਂ ਹੱਥ ਬਾਹਰ ਕੱਢਿਆ। ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਨਵੀਂ ਪੁਸਤਕ *ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਮੇਂ ਸਭ ਚੋਰ-ਚੋਰ* ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਟ ਕੀਤੀ ਇਉਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਦੇ ਚਰਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਫੁੱਲ ਭੇਟ ਕਰੀਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਉਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੋਏ, ਕੁਛ ਹੱਸੇ, ਕੁਝ ਬੋਲੇ, ਕੁਝ ਸਮਝ ਨਾ ਆਇਆ, ਕੁਝ ਥਥਲਾ ਕੇ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਸੀ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਲੱਗਾ ਉਹ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦੇ ਨਾਉਂ ਤੋਂ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਸੀ। ਪਿਛਲੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੱਸਿਆ। ਇਕ ਅੱਧਾ ਮਿੰਟ ਰਸਮੀ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਮੈਂ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਦੇਰ ਰੁਕਨਾ ਠੀਕ ਨਾ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਇਜਾਜ਼ਤ ਚਾਹੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਹੱਥ ਫਿਰ ਰਜਾਈ ‘ਚੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਕੱਢਿਆ। ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੱਥ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਥਾਂ ’ਚ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਪਲੋਸਿਆ, ਹੱਥ ਕੂਲਾ ਸੀ, ਨਿੱਘਾ ਸੀ, ਮਸਤਕ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਇਆ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਚੁੰਮਿਆ। ਹੱਥ ਕੂਲਾ ਸੀ, ਨਿੱਘਾ ਤੇ ਸਨੇਹ ਭਰਿਆ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਲੇਖਣੀ ਤੋਂ ਲਾਚਾਰ, ਉਸ ਖੇਤੀ ਵਾਂਗ ਜੋ ਕਦੇ ਹਰੀਆਂ ਭਰੀਆਂ ਫ਼ਸਲਾਂ ਤੇ ਫ਼ਲ, ਫ਼ੁੱਲ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਮੈਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਆਇਆ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਬੇਟੀ ਤੇ ਭੈਣ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ ਹੋਈ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਾ ਮੈਂ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਤੋਂ ਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਲੇਖਕ ਵੀ ਹਾਂ। ਮਿਸ਼ਰਾ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੱਸ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਕਮਰੇ 'ਚ ਗਏ। ਮੇਰੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਸਰਹਾਣੇ ਵੇਖੀ, ਚੁੱਕ ਲਿਆਏ। ਗੱਲਾਂ-ਗੱਲਾਂ 'ਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਹਾਲਤ 'ਤੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੱਚ ਭਰ ਆਇਆ। ਗੁਨਿੰਦਰ ਨੇ ਮੌਕਾ ਸੰਭਾਲਦਿਆਂ ਮੇਰਾ ਮੂਡ ਬਦਲਣ ਲਈ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਵੀ ਕੁਝ ਖਾਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਕੀਤਾ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਸੇ ਦਿਨ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਤੋਂ ਲਿਆਂਦੀ ਸ਼ੀਲਡ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਇੱਜ਼ਤ ਅਫਜਾਈ ਲਈ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਇੱਥੇ ਇਹ ਲਿਖਣਾ ਵੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਬੇਟੀ ਤੇ ਬੇਟਾ ਨ੍ਰਿਪਿੰਦਰ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਉੱਚ ਕੋਟੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ 'ਚ ਡਾਕਟ੍ਰੇਟ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਨ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਆਏ ਦਿਨ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਬਦਲੇ ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮਾਣ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਾਸ਼! ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਿਹਤ ਠੀਕ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਉਹ ਉੱਠ-ਬੈਠ, ਚਲ-ਫਿਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਮਾਣ ਇੱਜਤਾਂ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਾਣਦੇ।

ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਕੁਝ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਵੀ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਚੀਜ਼ ਦੀ ਕਮੀ ਰੱਖ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਆਖ਼ਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਮੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਵਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਤਨਾ ਕੁਝ ਹੁੰਦਿਆਂ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਵੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਤਨੀ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੁਣ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ, ਕੁਝ ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਦਾ ਲਈ ਵਿਛੋੜਾ ਦੇ ਗਈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਬੱਚੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਵੱਸੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਬੇਟੀ ਹੁਣੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਗਈ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਬੇਟਾ ਹੁਣ ਤਕ ਆ ਕੇ ਚਲਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਫ਼ਰਜ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਦਾ ਪਿਆਰ। ਉਹ ਵਾਰੋ-ਵਾਰੀ ਇਧਰ ਚੱਕਰ ਲਗਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਭੈਣ ਤੇ ਮਿਸ਼ਰਾ ਜੀ ਵਾਪਸ ਆ ਕੇ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਸਾਥੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਆਪਣਿਆਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਸਤਰਾਂ ਲਿਖਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਟੈਲੀਫ਼ੋਨ 'ਤੇ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਨ। ਉਹ ਇਕ ਸੂਝਵਾਨ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਰਜ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜ਼ੀ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਸਨ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਅੱਜ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹੇ। ਕੀ ਪਤਾ ਸੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ ਹੀ ਆਖ਼ਰੀ ਯਾਦ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਏਗੀ।

ਅਜੀਤ
7 ਜੂਨ 1998

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ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ—ਇਕ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਂਜਲੀ

ਡਾ. ਜੋਗਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਪੁਆਰ *

ਮੌਤ ਨੇ 30 ਮਈ 1998 ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਝਟਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੀ ਲੰਬੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਖਤਮ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਸਕੱਤਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਘੜਨ ’ਚ ਮੁੱਖ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ। ਉਹ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ 1962 ’ਚ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਹੋਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਾਨੀ ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ ਹੁੰਦਿਆਂ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਦੋ ਕਿਤਾਬਾਂ *ਦ ਹੈਰੀਟੇਜ ਆਫ਼ ਦ ਸਿੱਖਸ* (1964) ਤੇ *ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ* (1966) ਲਿਖੀਆਂ। ਇਹ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ’ਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਹੋਈਆਂ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਤੇ ਉਸਾਰੂ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਭਾ ਨੂੰ ਧਿਆਨ ’ਚ ਰੱਖਦਿਆਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਦੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਉਹ ਹਾਰਵਰਡ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਗਏ ਤੇ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਸੌਂਪੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ 1969 ਦੀ ਤਿੰਨ ਸੌ ਸਾਲਾ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਮੌਕੇ ਛਪਵਾ ਕੇ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਪਾਇਆ।

ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ 1970 ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਖੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਸੰਭਾਲੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪਾਠ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਆਪਕਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਖੋਜ ਦੇ ਸਾਧਨ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ *ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ* ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਾਜੈਕਟ ’ਤੇ ਇੰਨੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਰੀਸ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ।

ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਮੌਤ ਨੂੰ ਓਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਤੱਕ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਜੈਕਟ ਪੂਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ। ਜਦੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਖ਼ਰੀ ਸਾਹ ਲਿਆ, ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਤਕ ਉਹ ਚੌਥੀ ਸੈਂਚੀ ਦੇ ਪਰੂਫ਼ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਸਨ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦਵਤਾ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ, ਦੁਰਲੱਭ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ

* ਸਾਬਕਾ ਵਾਈਸ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ।

ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿਦਵਤਾ, ਹਲੀਮੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ੰਸਕ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰ ਲਏ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਇਕ ਨਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਘਾਟਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਲਈ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਬੜੇ ਹੀ ਡੂੰਘੇ ਦੁੱਖ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ।

ਅਕਾਲੀ ਪਤ੍ਰਿਕਾ
7 ਜੂਨ 1998

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ਇਕ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ—ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ

*ਤੀਰਥ ਸਿੰਘ**

ਕੁੱਝ ਵਿਰਲੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਹੀ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਅਨੰਤ ਛਾਪ ਛੱਡ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਸੰਕਲਪ, ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਇਰਾਦੇ, ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਅਕੀਦੇ, ਅਣਥੱਕ ਲਗਨ ਅਤੇ ਮਿਸਾਲੀ ਸਾਹਸ ਸਦਕਾ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਐਸੇ ਪੂਰਨੇ ਪਉਣ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਮਯਾਬ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸੋਚ ਦੀ ਕਰਾਮਾਤੀ ਉਡਾਣ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਨਾਰਥਕ ਬਣਦੇ ਹਨ। ਵੀਹਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਮਹਾਨ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਅੱਜ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ ਪ੍ਰੰਤੂ ਆਪ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਅਤੇ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਗਤ ਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਵਡਮੁੱਲੀ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਚਰਚਾ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਤਕ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਰਹੇਗੀ।

ਮਿੱਠ-ਬੋਲੜੇ, ਸੁਸ਼ੀਲ, ਸੁਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ, ਸਾਦਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਜਮ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਮੁਤਲਾਸ਼ੀ, ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਸੁਮੇਲ, ਹਰਦਿਲ ਅਜ਼ੀਜ਼ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਹਨ। ਸੱਚ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਜੋ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਕਾਰਨਾਮੇ ਸਰ-ਅੰਜ਼ਾਮ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਕੋਈ ਇਕ ਇਕੱਲੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ।

6 ਮਾਰਚ 1921 ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਛੋਟੇ ਜਿਹੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ (ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ) ਵਿਚ ਜਨਮੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੁਰਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਅਪਾਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਹੋਈ ਕਿ ਆਪ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਇਕ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਚਿੰਤਕ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਹੋਏ। ਇਕ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਜੰਮੇ-ਪਲੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ 1943 ਵਿਚ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਤੋਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੀ ਐਮ.ਏ. ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਉੱਥੇ ਹੀ ਅਧਿਆਪਕ ਲੱਗ ਗਏ। ਸਾਲ ਕੁ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਹੀ 1944 ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਬਰਜਿੰਦਰਾ ਕਾਲਜ, ਫ਼ਰੀਦਕੋਟ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਮੁਖੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਹੋਏ। ਸੰਨ 1958 ਵਿਚ ਆਪ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਕਾਲਜ, ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਦੀ ਪਦਵੀ ਤੇ ਸਸ਼ੋਭਿਤ ਹੋਏ। ਆਪ ਦੀ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਸੂਝ-ਬੂਝ. ਸਿਆਣਪ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਦਵਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ

* ਸਾਬਕਾ ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ।

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਮੈਂਬਰ-ਸੈਕਟਰੀ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਨ 1962 ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਹੋਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਆਪ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ ਥਾਪੇ ਗਏ।

ਆਪ ਨੇ ਕਈ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਨੂੰ ਅਣਗੌਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਆਪ ਦੇ ਯਤਨਾਂ ਸਦਕਾ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਨ 1970 ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦਾ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਜੋ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਸੀ। ਆਪ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਬੜੀ ਸ਼ਿੱਦਤ ਨਾਲ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨਾਂ-ਮਾਤਰ ਹੀ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਸਮੱਗਰੀ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਘਾਟ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਤ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ (*ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖ਼ਇਜ਼ਮ*) ਦਾ ਵੱਡ-ਆਕਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਕੰਮ ਹੱਥ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਸ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਕਾਰਜ ਦੀ ਸੰਪੂਰਨਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਇਕੋ-ਇਕ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਾ ਮਿਥ ਲਿਆ। ਇਸ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਆਪ ਇਸ ਹੱਦ ਤੱਕ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਬੱਧ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਕਿ ਜਦੋਂ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਵਾਈਸ-ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਬਣਨ ਦੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਤਾਂ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਨਿਮਰ ਤੇ ਮਿੱਠ ਬੋਲੇ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਅਹੁਦਾ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾਂਹ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੱਚੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਅੱਗੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਵਿਘਨ ਸਮਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਬਖ਼ਸ਼ੇ। ਬਿਖਮ ਰਸਤੇ ਦੇ ਪਾਂਧੀਅ ਨੂੰ ਥਾਂ-ਥਾਂ ਪ੍ਰੀਖਿਆ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਲੰਘਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਰਮਯੋਗੀ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਅਨੇਕ ਰੁਕਾਵਟਾਂ ਆਈਆਂ। ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਲਕਵੇ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਇਤ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਆਪ ਦੀ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਸਤਿਕਾਰਯੋਗ ਜੀਵਨ-ਸਾਥਣ ਸਰਦਾਰਨੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਜੀ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਵਿਛੋੜਾ ਦੇ ਗਏ। ਦੋਵੇਂ ਬੱਚੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਨ। ਅਜਿਹੀ ਇਕੱਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਸ਼ਟ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਬਿਮਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਹੌਂਸਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਰਿਆ ਸਗੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵੀ ਵੱਧ ਸਾਬਤ-ਕਦਮੀ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਲ ਵੱਲ ਵੱਧਦੇ ਗਏ। ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਜਾਂ ਸੰਸਾਰਿਕ ਮੁਸੀਬਤ ਆਪ ਦੇ ਅਕੀਦੇ ਨੂੰ ਡੁਲਾ ਨਾ ਸਕੀ। ਅੰਤ ਵਿਚ ਜਿੱਤ ਆਪ ਦੀ ਹਿੰਮਤ, ਹੌਂਸਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਹੋਈ। ਆਪਣੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਚਲਾਣੇ ਤੋਂ ਥੋੜ੍ਹਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਕਾਰਜ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ।

ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖ਼ਇਜ਼ਮ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸ, ਸਾਹਿਤ ਤੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਲਗਪਗ 20 ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਆਪ ਦੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ

ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਂਤਕ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹੈ। *ਹੈਰੀਟੇਜ਼ ਆਫ਼ ਦ ਸਿੱਖਸ* ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਜ਼ੁਬਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਪੜ੍ਹਾ ਰਹੀ ਹਰ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਇਸ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਵੀਕਾਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਪ ਦੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਅਕਾਦਮੀ ਨੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ, ਹਿੰਦੀ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੰਧੀ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਤੇ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਪੱਧਰ ’ਤੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਨੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਡਾਕਟਰੇਟ ਦੀ ਉਪਾਧੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਚਲਾਣੇ ਉਤੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਾਣਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸਦਮਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਹੁੰਚਿਆ ਬਲਕਿ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਸ਼ੋਕ ਦੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਫੈਲ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਛੋੜਾ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਕੌਮ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਨਾ ਪੂਰਿਆ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਘਾਟਾ ਹੈ।

ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਲੰਮੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੱਕ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਅਵਸਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਦੇ ਗੁੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੱਕਿਆ। ਖਿੜਿਆ ਚਿਹਰਾ, ਹਰ ਇਕ ਨਾਲ ਮੋਹ, ਇੱਥੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਜੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾ ਕਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ। ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੂਝ-ਬੂਝ, ਉਦਾਰਤਾ, ਹਮਦਰਦੀ, ਮੋਹ, ਮਹਿਮਾਨ ਨਿਵਾਜ਼ੀ ਤੇ ਅਪਣੱਤ ਨੂੰ ਭੁਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਕ ਪੂਰਨ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ, ਚਲਦਾ ਫਿਰਦਾ ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ, ਕਰਮਯੋਗੀ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ, ਸੁਚੱਜਾ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਕ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਮੀਰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਤਵ ਨੂੰ, ਮੈਂ ਜਿਸ ਵੀ ਪਹਿਲੂ ਤੋਂ ਚੇਤੇ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ, ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਬੇਮਿਸਾਲ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਸ ਬੇਮਿਸਾਲ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਦੀਅ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਲੋਕ ਦੇਰ ਤਕ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਦਾ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਿਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਯਾਦ ਰੱਖਣਗੇ। ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਗਤ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਦੀ ਜੋ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰ ਗਏ ਹਨ, ਉਸ ਸਦਕਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਤੱਕ ਜਿਉਂਦਾ ਰਹੇਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਪੰਨਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਨਹਿਰੀ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ
7 ਜੂਨ 1998

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ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ

*ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੁੱਗਲ**

ਉਹੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੋਈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਖ਼ਦਸ਼ਾ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਅਕਸਰ ਖਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ, ਜਦੋਂ ਕਦੀ ਵੀ ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੀ ਕੋਠੀ ਏ-1 ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਨਿਕਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਮੇਰੇ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ਾਹਦੀ ਭਰਦਾ, ਇਸ ਮੀਨਾਰ ਨੇ ਢਹਿ ਪੈਣਾ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ *The Sikh Encyclopaedia* ਦੀ ਚੌਥੀ ਤੇ ਆਖ਼ਰੀ ਸੈਂਚੀ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰੈਸ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਗਈ।

ਇਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਿਰ 'ਤੇ ਲਈ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਤੁਰ ਗਏ। ਮੈਂ ਪੂਰੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਕਹਿ ਸਕਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਉਹ ਸਿਰੇ ਚਾੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ, ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀਆਂ, ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ, ਖੋਜੀਆਂ, ਸਾਹਿਤਕਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇ ਵੱਸ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ, ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਦਾਈਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਹੱਥ ਪਾਏ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਖ਼ੂਬੀ ਨਾਲ ਇਹਨੂੰ ਨਿਭਾਏ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਹਨੂੰ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਕਰ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਜੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਕੋਲ ਅਹਿਲੀਅਤ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਰਗੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ, ਜੇ ਅਹਿਲੀਅਤ ਵੀ ਸੀ, ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਵੀ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਜ਼ੁਬਾਨ ਉੱਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਰਗਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਜੇ ਇਹ ਸਭ ਕੁੱਝ ਕਿਸੇ ਕੋਲ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਰਗਾ ਸੁਹਜ-ਸਵਾਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ।

ਇਕ ਫ਼ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਸੀਰਤ ਸਾਹਿਤਕਾਰ ਤੁਰ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਖੱਪਾ ਕਦੀ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਭਰਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇਗਾ। ਮੈਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਆਖ਼ਰੀ ਸਾਊ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਸਾਂ। ਸਾਊ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਵਾਨ। ਇਤਨਾ ਮਹਾਨ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਤੇ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਨਮੂਨਾ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਣ-ਪਛਾਣ ਨਿਜੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਮੁਬਾਰਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹੋਈ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਰੱਖੀਆਂ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਚਾਅ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੁੱਝ ਕੁ ਦਾ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਨ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦਾ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਸਾਂ, ਖ਼ਬਰੇ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਝਿਜਕ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਪਰ ਕਿਸ ਸਾਹਿਤਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਚੰਗਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਕਿ

* ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਸਾਹਿਤਕਾਰ

ਉਹਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹਦੀ ਹਉਮੈਂ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਰਾਜ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰੇ? ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਦੋ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਉਲਥਾਇਆ। 'ਨੀਲੀ' ਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਇਤਨਾ ਵਧੀਆ ਸੀ, ਇਤਨੀ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਸ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਟ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ।

ਸਾਡੀ ਇਹ ਜਾਣ-ਪਛਾਣ ਇਕ ਨਿਵੇਕਲੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੀ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਦੀ ਚਾਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਦਲ ਗਈ। ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਹਾਂਗਾ। ਅਸੀਂ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੇ ਲੱਗਦੇ ਸਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਵਰਗੇ ਹੋਈਏ। ਇਸ ਹਸੀਨ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਤਨੇ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਸੰਜੋਏ ਰਹੇ। ਪੜ੍ਹੇ-ਲਿਖੇ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਪਰਵਿਰਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ-ਘਰ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂ।

ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਵਿਆਹਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਾਂ। ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਆ ਰਿਹਾਂ ਸਾਂ, ਮੈਂ ਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਡਿਉਢੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋੜੇ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਸਲੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਜਰਾਬਾਂ ਪਾ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਰਦਾਰਨੀ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਖਲੋਤੀ ਸੀ। ਉਹਦੀਆਂ ਤੱਕਣੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਹਦੇ ਸਲੀਕੇ ਤੋਂ ਉਹਦੇ ਖਲੋਣ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਤੋਂ ਇੰਝ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਕਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੋਵੇ, 'ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਨ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਕਾਹਲ ਨਹੀਂ, ਤੂੰ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿਤਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਹੋਰ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋਣ ਵਿਚ ਲਾ ਲੈ'। ਕਈ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਆਹ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਦੀ ਵੀ ਮੈਂ ਤੇ ਆਇਸ਼ਾ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਡਿਉਢੀ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਕਲ ਰਹੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਸਰਦਾਰਨੀ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਉਡੀਕ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਉਹ ਹਸੀਨ ਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਅੱਖੀਆਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਤਰਨ ਲੱਗ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਕ ਮਹਿਬੂਬ ਇਨਸਾਨ, ਇਕ ਮਹਾਨ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਤੇ ਇਕ ਬੇਜੋੜ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੌਮ ਨੂੰ *The Sikh Encyclopaedia* ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਢੋਆ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਤੁਰ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਲਈ ਆਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾਂ-ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਲਈ ਕ੍ਰਿਤਗਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਰਣਗੀਆਂ।

ਆਰਸੀ
ਜੁਲਾਈ 1998

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ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਦਾ ਚਲਾਣਾ

*ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਟੌਹੜਾ**

ਸ. ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੇਰੇ ਹਾਣੀ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਜਦੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਸਵਰਗਵਾਸ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਮਰਨਾ ਸੱਚ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਏਸ ਮਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਰੋਕ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਿਆ। ਪਰ ਮੌਤ ਦਾ ਖਿਆਲ ਹੀ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸੁਰ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਭਿਆਨਕਤਾ ਕੁਝ ਘੱਟ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਵਿਛੋੜੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਦਮਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਕੌਮ ਸਫ਼ਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੇਖਕ ਤੋਂ ਮਹਿਰੂਮ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਸ. ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸਫ਼ਲ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਰ ਵਰਗ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਮਿਲੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੀ ਵਾਕਫ਼ੀ ਦਿਨੋ ਦਿਨ ਘੱਟਦੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਵਿਛੋੜਾ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਰੜਕਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਸ. ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਹਲੀਮੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਜੱਗਤਾ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਵਿਚ ਕਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਹੱਥ ਨਹੀਂ ਫੈਲਾਇਆ ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਇੰਨਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਲੋੜ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਅੱਖੋਂ ਓਹਲੇ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦਾ ਉਹ ਅੰਗ ਹੀ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਥੀਂ ਸਾਰੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੇਖਦੇ-ਦੇਖਦੇ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੂਰ ਤੱਕ ਚਲੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਬੁਲੰਦੀਆਂ ਕਾਇਮ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ. ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਸੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਨੂੰ ਕਲਮ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਜਦੋਂ ਵੀ ਮੌਕਾ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਸੀ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਕਦੇ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਕੋ ਗੱਲ ਕਹਿਣੀ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ?

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* ਸਾਬਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ, ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ।

ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਦੀ ਜਿੰਨੀ ਕਦਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ, ਥੋੜ੍ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਵਿਦਾਇਗੀ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਇਕ ਚੰਗਾ ਕੰਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸ. ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਰੀਸ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਿਆਸਤਦਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਵਿਚ ਕਦੇ ਦਖਲ-ਅੰਦਾਜੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ। ਅੱਜ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਡੇ ਸ਼ਰੀਕੇ ਨੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਸ. ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਲਈ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਿਹੜੇ-ਜਿਹੜੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਉੱਥੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਤਨਦੇਹੀ ਨਾਲ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਰੀਕੇਬਾਜ਼ੀ ਘੱਟ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ-ਆਪਣੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਵੱਧ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਗਜ਼ਟ
ਅਗਸਤ 1998

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ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ

*ਪਰਮਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ**

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਵੱਡੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਸਨ। ਜਿਸ ਸਿਰੜ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਦਕ ਸਦਕਾ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਬਣਾਈ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਦੀ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਬਹੁਤ ਘੱਟ ਦੇਖਣ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਮੋਢੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਅਤੇ ਪਛੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਅਤੇ ਲਗਨ ਸਦਕਾ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਅਕਾਦਿਮਕ ਅਦਾਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਵਜੋਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਬਹੁਤ ਵੱਡੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਵਜੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧੀ ਕਰ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਉਹ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀ ਮਿੱਟੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਚਾਹੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਆਪਣੇ ਇਕ ਲੇਖ ਵਿਚ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀਆਂ ਯਾਦਾਂ ਸਾਂਝੀਆਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ, "ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਮੇਰੇ ਦਿਲ ਨੂੰ ਜੋ ਨਿਆਰੀ ਧੂ ਪਾਉਂਦਾ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਮੈਂ ਅੱਜ ਤਕ ਕਿਧਰੋਂ ਹੋਰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ—ਨਾ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ, ਨਾ ਲੰਡਨ, ਨਾ ਵਾਸ਼ਿੰਗਟਨ, ਨਾ ਰੈਸਟਨ।... ਮੇਰਾ ਜਨਮ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਬਚਪਨ ਸਾਰਾ, ਜਾਂ ਇਉਂ ਕਹਿ ਲਵੋ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ, ਜਦ ਮੈਂ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਪਾਸ ਫ਼ਿਰੋਜ਼ਪੁਰ ਜਾਂ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਾਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੀ ਲੰਘਿਆ। ਇਹੀ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਲਾਡਲੇ, ਪਿਆਰੇ ਦਿਨ ਸਨ। ਖ਼ੁਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਲੱਦੇ, ਮਹਿਕਾਂ ਖਲੇਰਦੇ।"

6 ਮਾਰਚ 1921 ਨੂੰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਾਮ ਲਾਲ ਉਪਲ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਤਾ ਰੂਪ ਕੌਰ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਦੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਖੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਹੋਇਆ। ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਮੁੱਢਲੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਹਾਈ ਸਕੂਲ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਤੋਂ ਦਸਵੀਂ ਪਾਸ ਕੀਤੀ। ਉਚੇਰੀ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਦਾਖ਼ਲਾ ਲੈ ਲਿਆ ਅਤੇ 1943 ਵਿਚ ਉਥੋਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੀ ਐਮ.ਏ. ਕਰ ਕੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ

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* ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ।

ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਰ 1944 ਵਿਚ ਬਰਜਿੰਦਰਾ ਕਾਲਜ, ਫ਼ਰੀਦਕੋਟ ਵਿਖੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਮੁਖੀ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਇਸੇ ਸਾਲ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਆਹ ਬੀਬੀ ਕੈਲਾਸ਼ ਕੌਰ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਦੋ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਸ. ਨ੍ਰਿਪਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਬੀਬਾ ਨਿੱਕੀ ਗੁਨਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਹੋਇਆ। ਗ੍ਰਹਿਸਤੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿੱਦਿਅਕ ਰੁਚੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਿਛੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਣ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿੱਦਿਅਕ ਰੁਚੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫ਼ਰੀਦਕੋਟ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਕੁਮਾਰ ਦਾ ਟਿਊਟਰ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਰਾਜਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਣਾ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਤਹਿਜ਼ੀਬ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਖਣ ਦਾ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਮਿਲਿਆ, ਉਸ ਨੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਨਿਖ਼ਾਰ ਲੈ ਆਂਦਾ।

ਵਿਦਵਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕੀ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਕਾਰਨ 1958 ਵਿਚ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਕਾਲਜ, ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। 1960 ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਫੁਲਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਬਣੀ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਰੂਪ ਰੇਖਾ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦਾ ਗਠਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਯਾਦਵਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਚੇਅਰਮੈਨ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਕੱਤਰ ਸਨ। ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਵਿਖੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਸੁਝਾਅ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਤੁਰੰਤ ਮੰਨ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਜੂਨ 1962 ਵਿਚ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਦੇ ਬਾਰਾਂਦਰੀ ਪੈਲੇਸ ਵਿਖੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਪਤੀ ਡਾ. ਰਾਧਾਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਨ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਉਦਘਾਟਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਭਾਈ ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਵਾਈਸ-ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ।

ਇਸ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਮਾਣ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ ਨੇ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਉੱਚ ਪਦਵੀਆਂ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਨ ਜਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਟਿਕੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਲਾਲਸਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾਲੀ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਸੱਜਣ ਇਹ ਦੱਸਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਤੋਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਵਾਰੀ ਵਾਈਸ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਦੇ ਅਹੁਦੇ ਦੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਸ਼ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਰੁਚੀ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਹ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਉੱਚ ਅਹੁਦੇ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੀ ਰਹੇ। ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ ਦੇ ਅਹੁਦੇ 'ਤੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੱਕੇ-ਪੈਰੀਂ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਅਤੇ ਲਗਨ ਨਾਲ ਕਾਰਜ ਕੀਤਾ। ਕੁਸ਼ਲਤਾ ਪੂਰਵਕ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਚਲਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿੱਦਿਅਕ ਰੁਚੀ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਜਾਰੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਸੀ।

1968 ਵਿਚ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀ ਹਾਰਵਰਡ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ 'ਸੈਂਟਰ ਫ਼ਾਰ ਦ ਸਟੱਡੀ ਆਫ਼ ਵਰਲਡ ਰਿਲੀਜ਼ਨਸ' ਵੱਲੋਂ ਇਕ ਸਾਲ ਦੀ ਫੈਲੋਸ਼ਿਪ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਸੈਂਟਰ ਦੇ ਡਾਇਰੈਕਟਰ ਵਿਲਫਰਡ ਕੈਂਟਵੈਲ ਸਮਿਥ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ

ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਵਿਚਾਰ-ਚਰਚਾ ਨੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਮੁੱਢਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਵਪੂਰਤ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਹਾਰਵਰਡ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਖੇ ਵਿਦਵਤਾ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਣ ਦਿੱਤੇ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਣਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਟੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਇਕ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਈ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਖੋਜ-ਭਰਪੂਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕੀ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਾਂ, ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਦਰਾਂ-ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਹਿਰ-ਗੰਭੀਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਵੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਜਾਂ ਜਿਸ ਵੀ ਕਾਰਜ ਨੂੰ ਹੱਥ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ, ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਫ਼ਲਤਾ ਪੂਰਵਕ ਸਿਰੇ ਚਾੜ੍ਹ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਹਰ ਕਾਰਜ ਵਿਚ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਾਯੋਗ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਨਾਲ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਜੁੜ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਬਗ਼ੈਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਬਿਆਨ ਅਧੂਰਾ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਵਾਈਸ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਸ. ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਰੰਗ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਯਤਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੈ। ਵਾਈਸ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਹਾਰਵਰਡ ਅਤੇ ਸਟੈਨਫ਼ੋਰਡ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਫੇਰੀ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਉਥੋਂ ਦੇ ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਚਾਰ-ਚਰਚਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਖੇ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਚੇਸ਼ਟਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਪੱਧਰ ’ਤੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਹੋਵੇ।

1666-67 ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਦੀ ਤੀਜੀ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਭਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਨਾਈ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਗਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤਾਂ ’ਤੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਪਿਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਦੀ ਭਲਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਏ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨਤਾ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੇ ਮਨ ’ਤੇ ਭਾਰੀ ਅਸਰਦਾਇਕ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੋਈ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਵਾਈਸ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਸ. ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਰੰਗ ਨੇ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਗਰਾਂਟਸ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ, ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ, ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਫਾਉਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ ਕੋਲ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਣ ਲਈ ਸੁਝਾਅ ਮੰਗੇ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਕਿ ਬਹੁਤ ਖੁੱਲਦਿਲ੍ਹੀ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਕਰ ਲਏ ਗਏ। ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਗਰਾਂਟਸ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਨੂੰ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਣ ਲਈ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਫੰਡ ਵੀ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕਰਵਾਏ। 27 ਦਸੰਬਰ 1967 ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਵਨ ਦਾ ਨੀਂਹ-ਪੱਥਰ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਪਤੀ ਡਾ. ਜ਼ਾਕਿਰ ਹੁਸੈਨ ਨੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ। 2 ਸਤੰਬਰ 1969 ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਈ। 1967 ਵਿਚ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੋਏ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ

ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਵਨ ਵਿਖੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਰੰਭ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਮੁਢਲੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਖੋਜ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇੱਥੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ, ਬੁੱਧ ਧਰਮ, ਇਸਾਈ ਧਰਮ, ਇਸਲਾਮ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੋਇਆ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਮਹਾਂਵੀਰ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਤ ਸ਼ੰਕਰਦੇਵ ਚੇਅਰਾਂ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ। ਵੀਹਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਅੱਠਵੇਂ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਖੇ ਅਧਿਆਪਨ ਕਾਰਜ ਵੀ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਐਮ.ਏ. ਅਤੇ ਐਮ.ਫਿਲ. ਕੋਰਸਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਪੀਐਚ.ਡੀ. ਪੱਧਰ ਦਾ ਖੋਜ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧੀ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਇੱਥੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਰਾਬਤਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼-ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦਾ ਹਾਰਵਰਡ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਨਾਲ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਆਦਾਨ-ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੋਣਾ ਮਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਰਾਬਤੇ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਅਰੰਭ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਛਿਮਾਹੀ ਜਰਨਲ 'ਦ ਜਰਨਲ ਆਫ਼ ਰਿਲੀਜੀਅਸ ਸਟੱਡੀਜ਼' ਨੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ। ਦੂਜੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਂਝ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਝ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਜਰਨਲ ਵੀ ਇਸੇ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਨਾਲ ਅਰੰਭ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਦੂਜੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਿਨਕ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ। 1969 ਵਿਚ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੋਏ ਇਸ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਛਪਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਿਆਰੀ ਆਰਟੀਕਲਾਂ ਨੇ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਉੱਥੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਚੱਲ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਖੋਜਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਮਿਲਿਆ। ਧਰਮ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ, ਤੁਲਨਾਤਮਿਕ ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ, ਵਿਆਖਿਆਕਾਰੀ, ਅੰਤਰ-ਧਰਮ ਸੰਵਾਦ, ਧਰਮ-ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਆਦਿ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਆਰਟੀਕਲ ਇਸ ਜਰਨਲ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿੰਗਾਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਡਾ. ਕੇ.ਐਲ. ਸੇਸ਼ਾਗਿਰੀ ਰਾਉ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਗੁਰਬਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਾਲਿਬ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਐਲ.ਐਮ. ਜੋਸ਼ੀ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਦਿ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਇਸ ਜਰਨਲ ਦੇ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਮਿਆਰ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਇਮ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਯਤਨਸ਼ੀਲ ਰਹੇ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੀਆਂ ਉਕਤ ਗਤੀਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਰਹੇ। ਵਾਈਸ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਸ. ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਰੰਗ ਨੇ 1970 ਵਿਚ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਮੁਖੀ ਦੀ ਜ਼ੁੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਸੌਂਪ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਨਦੇਹੀ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤੇ। ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਇਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਲਿਖੀਆਂ। ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿਭਾਗ

ਹਾਲੇ ਨਵਾਂ-ਨਵਾਂ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹਿਆ ਸੀ ਇਸ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਵੱਡੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਮੁੱਢਲੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ। ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੋਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਖੋਜ-ਸਮੱਗਰੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਯਤਨ ਅਰੰਭ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਟੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਲੇਖ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਏ। ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਦੌਰ ਦੇ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਖੋਜ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਹਦੀ ਭਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਇਹ ਹਨ—*ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ*, *ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਐਂਡ ਦ ਓਰਿਜਨ ਆਫ਼ ਦ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੇਥ*, *ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ*, *ਐਨ ਇੰਟਰੋਡਕਸ਼ਨ ਟੂ ਇੰਡੀਅਨ ਰਿਲੀਜ਼ਨਸ*, *ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ*, *ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ ਬਹਾਦਰ*, *ਬਰਕਲੇ ਲੈਕਚਰਜ਼ ਆਨ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ*, *ਦ ਹੈਰੀਟੇਜ ਆਫ਼ ਦ ਸਿੱਖਸ*, *ਆਸਪੈਕਟਸ ਆਫ਼ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਲਿਟਰੇਚਰ*, *ਹਾਇਰ ਐਜੂਕੇਸ਼ਨ ਇਨ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ* ਆਦਿ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੰਪਾਦਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਇਹ ਹਨ—*ਅਪਰੋਚਿਜ਼ ਟੂ ਦ ਸਟੱਡੀ ਆਫ਼ ਰਿਲੀਜਨ*, *ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਭਿਨੰਦਨ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ*, *ਪਰਸਪੈਕਟਿਵਜ਼ ਆਫ਼ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ*, *ਐਸੇਜ਼ ਇਨ ਆਨਰ ਆਫ਼ ਡਾ. ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ* ਅਤੇ *ਦ ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ*, 4 ਭਾਗ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਰਚਿਤ ਕੁਝ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਵੀ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਏ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ, ਉਰਦੂ), *ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ*, *ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ*, *ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ ਬਹਾਦਰ*, *ਸਾਡਾ ਵਿਰਸਾ (ਦ ਹੈਰੀਟੇਜ ਆਫ਼ ਦ ਸਿੱਖਸ)*, *ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਧਰਮ* ਆਦਿ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ 'ਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖੀ ਮੂਲ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦਾ 15 ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਹਨ—ਉੜੀਆ, ਅਸਾਮੀ, ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ, ਸਿੰਧੀ, ਹਿੰਦੀ, ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ, ਕੰਨੜ, ਗੁਜਰਾਤੀ, ਤਾਮਿਲ, ਤੇਲਗੂ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ, ਬੰਗਾਲੀ, ਮਰਾਠੀ, ਮਲਯਾਲਮ, ਮੈਥਿਲੀ। ਇਸ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦਾ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸ਼ਰੁਤੀਕਾਂਤ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ ਨੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਯਵ੍ਰਤ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀ ਨੇ *ਸ੍ਰੀਗੁਰੂਗੋਵਿੰਦਸਿੰਹਚਰਿਤਮ* ਸਿਰਲੇਖ ਅਧੀਨ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਵਿ ਰੂਪ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਕਾਵਿ-ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਾਰਨ, 1968 ਵਿਚ, ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਿਤਯ ਅਕਾਦਮੀ ਅਵਾਰਡ ਨਾਲ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ।

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਮੁੱਚਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਖੋਜ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵੱਲ ਲਾਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ '*ਦ ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ*' ਸੰਸਾਰ ਭਰ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਨਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨ ਕਿਰਤ ਹੈ ਬਲਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਗੀਨਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਹੜਾ

ਕਿ ਬਾਹਰੋਂ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਮੁਖ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਸਹਿਤ ਭੇਟ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਚਾਰ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ 2400 ਤੋਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਪੰਨਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਫੈਲੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਸ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਲਗਪਗ 3200 ਇੰਦਰਾਜ ਦਰਜ ਹਨ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ, ਸਿੱਖ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤਾਂ, ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਭਰ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਹਦੀ ਭਰਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਮੁਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ, ਕਸਬਿਆਂ, ਨਗਰਾਂ, ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਰੁਚੀ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਹੈ। ਸ. ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਰੰਗ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕਾਰਜ ਸੌਂਪਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਸਮੂਹ ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਰੁਚੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਕੁਚਿਤ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਕਾਰਜ ਨੂੰ ਨੇਪਰੇ ਚਾੜ੍ਹਨ ਲਈ ਸਫ਼ਲ ਯਤਨ ਅਰੰਭ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਸਨ। ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਆਖ਼ਰੀ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੱਕ ਇਹ ਇਸੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਵਿਚ ਜੁੱਟੇ ਰਹੇ। ਸੰਸਾਰ ਭਰ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਪੌਣੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਸੌ ਤੋਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਜੈਕਟ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਨਾ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਾਰਜ-ਕੁਸ਼ਲਤਾ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਹੈ।

ਧਰਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਕਾਰਜ ਦੀ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਸ਼ਲਾਘਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਥੀ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿਰੜ, ਲਗਨ, ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕੀ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਰਜਕੁਸ਼ਲਤਾ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਦੱਸਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਲੋੜੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਹੇਜ਼ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਅੰਗ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦਾ ਸਮੁੱਚਾ ਅਧਿਆਪਨ ਅਤੇ ਗ਼ੈਰ-ਅਧਿਆਪਨ ਵਰਗ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਦਵਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਨਿਸ਼ਠਾ ਦੀ ਹਾਮੀ ਭਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ, "ਇਹ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਤਵ ਦਾ ਸਵਾਮੀ, ਨਾ ਧਨ ਦੀ ਕਾਮਨਾ, ਨਾ ਪਦਵੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲਾਲਸਾ, ਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧੀ ਦਾ ਲੋਭ, ਨਾ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਦੀ ਹਉਮੈ, ਸਰਵਸਵ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀਕਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਕਲਮ ਚਲਾਉਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ।" ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ ਸ. ਤੀਰਥ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬਿਤਾਏ ਪਲਾਂ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਟਿੱਪਣੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, "ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਲੰਮੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੱਕ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਅਵਸਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਦੇ ਗੁੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੱਕਿਆ। ਖਿੜਿਆ ਚਿਹਰਾ, ਹਰ ਇਕ ਨਾਲ ਮੋਹ, ਇੱਥੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਜੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ। ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੂਝ-ਬੂਝ, ਉਦਾਰਤਾ, ਹਮਦਰਦੀ, ਮੋਹ, ਮਹਿਮਾਨ ਨਿਵਾਜ਼ੀ ਤੇ ਅਪਣੱਤ ਨੂੰ ਭੁਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਕ ਪੂਰਨ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ, ਚਲਦਾ ਫਿਰਦਾ ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ, ਕਰਮਯੋਗੀ ਸਖ਼ਸ਼ੀਅਤ, ਸੁਚੱਜਾ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਕ; ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਮੀਰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਤਵ ਨੂੰ ਮੈਂ ਜਿਸ

ਵੀ ਪਹਿਲੂ ਤੋਂ ਚੇਤੇ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ, ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਬੇਮਿਸਾਲ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ।"

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਏ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਕਾਰਨ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਨੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਅਧਰੰਗ ਦੀ ਬੀਮਾਰੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕਿਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸ. ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਟੌਹੜਾ ਇਹ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਆਏ ਸਨ; ਸ. ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਦਲ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਸਤਿਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਨ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿ 30 ਮਈ 1998 ਨੂੰ ਲੰਮੀ ਬੀਮਾਰੀ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਾਲ ਚਲਾਣਾ ਕਰ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਪਰ *ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼* ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਅਮਰ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਕਾਰਜ ਖੋਜਾਰਥੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਰਾਹ-ਦਸੇਰਾ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਹਨ।

ENGLISH SECTION

12

My Sikh Friend

*Eldon R. Hey**

When I reached his home very early in a summer morning, Harbans Singh had just arisen. He greeted me warmly, his long hair and beard flowing down over his shoulders and breast. A little later, he bound the hair up in a turban - one of the best-known signs, to a Westerner, of the presence of a Sikh.

Professor Harbans Singh is a scholarly, soft-spoken, gentle and humorous man - very warm and human - and very much a Sikh. It was a distinct pleasure to be a guest in his home for a few days, a home shared with his gracious wife and daughter Guninder Kaur. An older son Nripinder, whom I had met and known as Mickey, was studying at Harvard. I had read much about Sikhism before meeting Harbans Singh: yet my knowledge was expanded when I met, and talked, and lived with Harbans Singh. It is one thing to read about and to study, in an academic fashion, the rise and vicissitudes of a particular religious tradition: it is quite another to converse, learn to like, and become fast friends with one who is himself a participant in that religious tradition.

I had known, for instance, that Sikhism emanated from the life and teaching of Guru Nanak, who lived from 1469 to 1539; that Nanak had been succeeded by nine other Gurus, the last of whom was Guru Gobind Singh, who passed away in 1708. From that time on, the supreme authority passed from the person of the Guru, and was deemed to reside in the Adi-Granth, the Sikh body of scripture. Of the ten Gurus the first, Nanak, is the most important. Weary of the differences separating the Muslim and the Hindu in northwest India, he founded a new religious force which emphasized the oneness of God and the brotherhood of man. "Hindus and Muslims are one: The same Lord is the creator and nourisher of all. Recognize no distinctions between

* Canada

them... Men are all one." Nanak was something of an iconoclast, despising the ornateness particularly of Hindu religious ceremonial and opposed to the caste system, other inequalities, injustice and oppression. And of the ten gurus the last, Guru Gobind Singh, is undoubtedly the next to Nanak in significance. He lived almost two centuries after Nanak, and it was in his hands that the Sikh movement reached its culmination. It was the special contribution of Guru Gobind Singh to instil in the Sikhs a martial spirit. From that time on, Sikhs have been known for their fierce pride, their ability as soldiers, their willingness to die for any just cause.

As an outsider, I had always been intrigued by this apparent change in the Sikh tradition - from pacifist fellowship to martially-minded community. It was one of the first questions I put to my friend Harbans Singh. At first, he appeared to give full ground: saying that Nanak had his hands on the rosary and Gobind Singh his on the sword. But this apparent contradiction did not rise from within the Sikh tradition; in other Words, from the vantage-point of one within the Sikh community there was no contradiction. That community held that there was essentially one message, one teaching that started, continued, evolved, and finally was enshrined in the Sikh scripture. It is true that that one message elicited a different response depending upon the social environment and the political situation. All of the Gurus - Nanak and the others up to and including Gobind Singh - were all one in proclaiming the unity of God and the brotherhood of men. Yet Nanak lived and worked at a time when those in government allowed his essentially pacifist views full sway. This was not the case 200 years later. In short, Harbans Singh, the scholarly Sikh, held that the message proclaimed by the Gurus was essentially the same; that each Guru tended to make his own particular contribution depending upon the milieu in which he lived; that the message itself had undergone an inner evolution, a kind of progressive revelation.

But what about the contributions made to the Sikh religion and tradition by the older and still more powerful religions of Islam and Hinduism? Harbans Singh was willing to admit such contributions: though this did not minimize the creativity of Nanak and the following Gurus. Creativity, as Harbans Singh pointed out, is not a matter of making something out of nothing; but rather a breathing of new life and significance into what is already there. From Islam, came Nanak's insistence upon the unity of God; the social equality of all men; the

emphasis upon life and work and activity in this world - Nanak scorned otherworldliness of the ascetic kind.

I raised with Harbans Singh the question of caste in the Sikh community. Clearly, Guru Nanak wished his new faith to abolish it. But it was a battle which had never been completely won. Religiously, there was no distinction. A Sikh, once a Sikh, could and did perform all functions attached to the *gurdwara*, the Sikh house of worship: he could conduct services, read the scriptures, cook and serve in the kitchen associated with each *gurdwara*. This was unquestioned. But socially - yes, admitted my host, there is a distinction. "In my heart of hearts, I see all men as equal, all Sikhs as my brethren. I have invited and do invite them to my home. But I confess to you, that when it comes to the marriage of my son or daughter, then these social, distinctions do enter in. I admit it."

What impressed me about Harbans Singh was his faith, his humanity, his openness. He is a well-recognized scholar of Sikhism; and has written widely and well. I have read his book on Guru Nanak. And that book is meant to tell not only the historical facts about Guru Nanak, who lived in a certain place and time, and who did certain things: it is also the chronicling of Guru Nanak's significance for a community and indeed for the author, Harbans Singh, himself. Fact and significance belong together: fact without meaning is a mere recitation of historical idiosyncrasies; while significance without historical rootage is all too often a series of pious platitudes. Harbans Singh's book on Guru Nanak avoids both of these extremes and steers a very valuable middle path. The book, like the man Harbans Singh, is a combination of mind and heart; of devotion and discipline; of piety and perception.

What impressed me about Harbans Singh, the Sikh, was Harbans Singh, the man. To meet such a person is to emerge a bigger, better person oneself.

Souvenir Professor Harbans Singh
1992

13

My Sikh Friend at Harvard

*Professor Daud Rahbar**

Specially fortunate was the arrival of Professor Harbans Singh of the Panjabi University of India as Visiting Professor at the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University in 1968-69. He had been assigned the project of preparing a biography of Guru Nanak the quincentenary of whose birth fell in 1969.

By virtue of religious diversity India is a veritable amusement park. People of all communities and denominations there have a sense of comparisons by common sense. But systematic comparative religion is so far of very limited interest to the academic communities. Sikhism, founded by Guru Nanak, is the logical pioneer in this field. The inspiration of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, originated in his comparative revelation. The Sikh community has continued to cultivate a humorous wonderment over the difference between the Hindu and the Muslim. The Sikhs look upon themselves as impartial spectators of the Hindu scene and the Muslim scene. The humour in the community is ensured by its determination to reject stuffy sophistication. Sikhism is delightful by its commitment to simplicity.

Harvard University became Professor Harbans Singh's host for the year (1968-69) to enable him to complete the biography of Guru Nanak without distraction. The book he produced is a masterly and charming work, full of reverence for the subject and written in a style displaying the aesthetic gifts of the author. His prose cannot he imitated. There is no exhibition of vocabulary and idiom in it. It is gentle communication of knowledge about the simple life of Guru Nanak. Among the founders of religious traditions Guru Nanak is to my mind the gentlest. The story of his life does not agitate. It is like a balm because he was calm.

* USA

Professor Harbans Singh and his wife and their son Nripinder Singh (nicknamed Mika) lived together in an apartment at the Center. They kept a neat home but without elaborate formality. With them we could relax. Mrs Harbans Singh gave sincere love to our daughters. She had a repertoire of instant recipes which she could draw on for ready hospitality.

At present Professor Harbans Singh is devoting his years after retirement from teaching to the editing of the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism.

Souvenir Professor Harbans Singh
1992

14

An Appreciation

*Professor Margaret Chatterjee**

It gives me great pleasure to add a few words of facilitation and homage to Professor Harbans Singh in this volume to which I have been privileged to contribute. Professor Harbans Singh was a student of English literature at Khalsa College, Amritsar and at that time a pupil of my husband, the Late Professor Nripendranath Chatterjee. It was in this capacity, as a former student that I first met him, soon after Partition. I was immediately struck by his rare quality of gentleness and refinement of spirit, his sense of loyalty to his former teacher, and his depth of learning. As the years went by, and I speak now of a friendship which is more than four decades strong association with him and his wife, then his children and grandchildren, has become more and more precious to me. I have always looked upon his scholarly work with admiration, finding in him my own teacher in Sikh studies. This coming full circle of the relationship of teacher and pupil has given me great satisfaction. My present interest in various aspects of Sikhism is entirely due to the initial impression I had in the 1940ties of a Sikh gentleman who embodied in himself the tradition about which he wrote with such insight, The Encyclopaedia which is now his 1ifework will be a wellspring of learning and inspiration for future generations. I pray that he be granted health and strength to continue his scholarly work for many years to come, secure in the knowledge that he has inspired many younger scholars to explore has made such an outstanding contribution.

Sikhs Past & Present
Autumn 1992

* Calcutta

15

Uniquely Talented

*Kartar Singh Duggal**

Professor Harbans Singh belongs to the tribe of eminent Punjabi litterateurs the like of Principal Teja Singh and Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib. Men of no mean literary talent themselves, they were interested more in projecting others and thus enriching the Punjabi milieu.

This is exactly how Professor Harbans Singh started his scholarly career. A teacher by profession, he translated into English a number of promising contemporary writers whether they were Mohan Singh and Amrita Pritam the poets, or Gurmukh Singh 'Musafir' and Kulwant Singh Virk, the short story writers. Later he rendered into English excerpts from Bhai Vir Singh's magnum opus, *Rana Surat Singh*, for the UNESCO, with distinction.

And then on the lines of his illustrious precursors Teja Singh and Talib, he switched to the Sikh studies. He wrote a series of highly researched books entitled *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikhs Faith*, *Guru Tegh Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Bhai Vir Singh*.

Only the historiographers know how difficult it is to write about any aspect of Indian history. As a people we have never given importance to chronicling the events of our times in the annals of Indian history. Our artists painted murals in the Ajanta caves the like of which the world has not known, but nowhere did they indicate their own identity. The breath-taking sculptures at Ellora and several other historical sites contain no clue to the geniuses who created them. Guru Nanak traversed this land of ours a little over 500 years ago, and yet we don't have any reliable record of his life. The other day Dr. W.H. Mcleod sought to demolish some popular misconceptions about Guru Nanak's life, including his date of birth. According to him out of

* Renowned literateur

124 *sakhis*, there are 39 that must be rejected, and there are 17 more that are improbable: the rest are just possible. The researcher in Professor Harbans Singh is aware of the shortcomings, but the devotee in him views the problem in his own perspective:

> "These accounts were written by men of faith. They wrote for the faithful - of a theme which had grown into their lives through the years as a real, vivid truth - straightforward history was not their concern, nor was their description objective and conceptual. Their thought-stream was more individual and they expressed themselves in graphic, representational terms and in the form of drama and narrative."
>
> (*Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikhs Faith*)

Professor Harbans Singh believes that even in legends one is dealing with history, though not arranged in the "usual linear, chronological order." He maintains that the life of Guru Nanak as recorded in the *Janamsakhis* needs to be read at different levels of meaning, more for its symbolic content. When he describes Guru Nanak's birth with the skill of a consummate craftsman, he does offence neither to the staunchest devotee of the Guru nor to a dry-as-dust historiographer:

> "According to *Janamsakhi* accounts, light flashed across the mud-built room in which the birth took place. The gifted and the wise in the celestial regions and below rejoiced in the fortunate event and stood in the obeisance to the superb spirit which had adopted a bodily vesture in fulfilment of the divine will."

While this is an illustration of how the scholar in Professor Harbans Singh makes the most poetic description of an event palatable to the historiographer, the creative artist in him describes some of the authentic facts of history in a manner which read like a piece of poetry:

> "To Anandpur came the dust-laden severed head of its founder—a sight which must have melted the rocks of the surrounding hills."
>
> (*Guru Gobind Singh*)

I myself have recently been engaged in writing about the Sikh Gurus and I found that it was, perhaps, the most tiring assignment, I had ever undertaken in my career as a writer. Professor Harbans Singh

wields his pen in this most sensitive field with amazing confidence and sovereign ease. His greatest contribution is that while taking due cognizance of the latest researches, he makes fullest use of the traditional and scriptural evidence obtaining on the subject.

However, he treads surer ground while writing on Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Bhai Vir Singh. There is no dearth of writers on either of them, but it can be claimed with confidence that Professor Harbans Singh's account of the two most outstanding figures in the history of the Sikhs after the great Gurus, is remarkable not only for providing all the information available on the subject but also for presenting it in the manner of a creative writer. Here is an account of Bhai Vir Singh's historical encounters with Professor Harbans Singh:

> "Bhai Vir Singh sitting on the podium affectionately patted Puran Singh as he finished his speech. He took him along to his own lodgings at the close of the session. Both had their meals together and talked far into the night. Puran Singh was well read in comparative religion, literature and philosophy, especially Vedanta. He had many questions and many arguments in his repertoire, but was completely disarmed in the presence of Bhai Vir Singh. The latter's words, simple but charged with deep inner certitude. winged inside him. His doubts were dissolved and his quest ceased."
>
> (*Bhai Vir Singh*).

Professor Harbans Singh is currently engaged in the preparation of an Encyclopaedia of Sikhism at the Punjabi University, Patiala. It is a monumental work requiring deep devotion and strenuous labour spread over several years. Professor Harbans Singh has equipped himself with scholarship and vast learning in Sikh studies. It is a challenging task and among the contemporary writers, there is none who can do greater justice to it. It requires ploughing a lonely furrow screened from publicity and temperamentally Professor Harbans Singh is the man for it. He is indeed uniquely talented!

The Sikh Review
February 1995

16

Harbans Singh: A Romance of Letters

*Kulraj Singh**

A rare amalgam of scholarship, academic excellence, administrative acumen, felicitous expression, idealism and that indefinable quality called wisdom. Professor Harbans Singh seems to have been pre-ordained for guiding and supervising an Encyclopaedia of Sikhism which will go down in the annals of human knowledge as a singular achievement.

Born on March 6, 1921, he completed his formal education with Master's degree in English literature from Khalsa College, Amritsar in 1943. His college career is embellished by all-round distinctions in extra-curricular activity as also in academics - president of the student's union, editor of the college magazine, et. al. His early association with sports led to his being made president of the Khalsa College Hockey Club soon after his appointment as Lecturer in English in this college. Considering the record of Khalsa College in hockey, the appointment was significant and undoubtedly an acknowledgement of his deep interest in and knowledge of the game. In just about a year in 1944, Professor Harbans Singh hopped to the richer pastures of the Faridkot state education service, invited to Brijindra College to become the head of the Department of English by the State's Maharaja whose zeal for securing top talent for the State's institutions was legendary. There was no looking back for him thereafter. He rose from position of head of the Department. of English to the Principal of Government College, Muktsar (1958) and visiting fellow of Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, U.S.A. (1968-69), head of the Department of Religious Studies, Punjabi University (1969), to the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Religious Studies (1969). An invitation to the University of California followed, for delivering

* Patiala

a series of lectures on Sikhism (since published in book form as the Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism). Thus he scaled one academic peak after another before he prepared to launch his monumental project - the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism. This catalogue is however incomplete for it omits such notable involvement as membership of World Conference on Religion and Peace and participation in International Consultation in search of Non-violent Alternatives, at Derry, Ireland.

Professor Harbans Singh did not lag behind in the field of administration, his scholastic pursuits notwithstanding. The principalship of Government College, Muktsar was followed by appointment as Member-Secretary of the Punjabi University Commission (1960). In 1962, he became the first Registrar of the Punjabi University. The climax was reached when in 1977, he declined the offer of Vice-Chancellorship of the Punjabi University - a gesture that reveals the true nature of the man and his unswerving commitment to the cause of letters. Encyclopaedia of Sikhism was both his passion and his fulfilment and nothing, not even the glory of a Vice-Chancellor's office - and that too in an age when material ambition has eaten deep into the tissue of academics - could pull him off course.

With the beginning of his involvement in the Encyclopaedia, Professor Harbans Singh has become a saintly recluse, spending the larger part of his time in, apart from scholarly pursuits, meditation. One sees him only for short periods at social get-togethers - a distant man but still most effusively gracious.

Informed by rare quietude, the even course of Professor Harbans Singh's life was disturbed by disabling ailments associated with blood pressure and he has remained tied down to home and bed for quite some years now. But his physical disability has neither affected his intellectual sharpness nor dampened his zest for work. File after file of the Encyclopaedia work is cleared with utmost promptitude. It is our fervent prayer that he completes the great work, comprising no fewer than 4,000 entries, and sees the worth of his work acknowledged soon enough. Professor Harbans Singh may be disabled but, unrestrained by the after-effects of a paralytic stroke, he pursues his romance with letters - in the same thorough going and meticulous manner. The dons in the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism establishment are baffled by the profuse use of red pencil. Such indeed is the power of his romantic relationship with letters!

Harbans Singh's achievements as a scholar and writer have

already been acknowledged. He has written thirteen books, three of them in collaboration with others, and edited another three. All sixteen are eminently readable, in spite of the seriousness of the subject of some. In his The *Heritage of the Sikhs*, *The Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism*, as also other books on Sikhism he has achieved the rare feat of balancing reverence and objectivity. Along with the Encyclopaedia, *The Heritage of the Sikhs* will remain his most outstanding and abiding contributions to the religion and history of the Sikhs.

The Sikh Review, Editorial
February 1995

17

Goodbye, Gentle Interpreter of Sikhism!

*Wilfred Cantwell Smith**

Professor Harbans Singh was one of those human beings - rare on today's scene, alas! Whose life renews and nourishes our faith in humanity and encourage us all to dream and to strive for a better world, of community and concord and mutual support. His dignity, integrity, graciousness, and respect for all, were 'outstanding, and made a deep impression, whether conscious or unconscious- doubtless both, on those of us who had the good fortune to meet and to know him, to feel his presence and to watch his activity.

Combined with this personal-quality is the mark that he made as an intellectual in the academic world and as a contribution to the social and cultural world. We at Harvard remember, with delight and gratitude, the significant part that he played in our Study of Religion programme and the Center for the Study of World Religions. His published writings before and since then have been markedly valuable.

Still more important in widening circles for years ahead is his beloved Encyclopaedia of Sikhism: a work of scholarship that will prove of solid substance and of ramifying consequence. The way that he pursued this massive task with enthusiasm and unflinching resolution, undeterred by potential distractions of physical disability, moved those of us who had known him, and will touch multitudes, unaware of the cost to himself, but appreciative of the results. Both Sikhs and the rest of us cannot but rejoice at the Encyclopaedia he completed before he passed away.

* USA

Professor Harbans Singh spoke well for the Sikh Community in both senses of phrase: literally, as a highly effective spokesman; metaphorically, in that he represented so admirably what Sikh faith can mean.

The Sikh Review
July 1998

18

Professor Harbans Singh: An Appreciation of A Gentleman

*W. Owen Cole**

"We feel as though we have lost a father", was the way that one of my friends in Patiala spoke to me of the Professor's death when I phoned him soon after it had taken place. In many ways he expressed my own feelings for when I joined him in 1983 to spend four months working on the Encyclopaedia at his invitation, it was almost as a father that he greeted me. At times he was consoling the widow of his own teacher but he found space to welcome unhurriedly this stranger from Britain. From that moment on he has played an important part in my life, as he has done in the lives of hundreds of other people.

Professor Harbans Singh was a scholar, and I use the word cautiously for it is a piece of devalued academic currency, everyone seems to be scholar nowadays. However, he was. His works bear testimony to this affirmation, and it is the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* which will give him academic immortality. During recent years, since the loss of his beloved wife, Kailash, in 1992, to whom it is dedicated, and two strokes which had rendered him unable to write, his colleagues and friends lived in constant fear lest he might be cut off before the work was completed or, latterly, before it was published. Fortunately, the final volume was with the printer, and the first three were published before his death. The work is monumental and although it will be revised repeatedly during the next century, it is safe to argue that without his insight and stamina it would not have existed at all. I am certainly not aware of anyone who could have succeeded in accomplishing this task. It would have taken a committee as, one day, the translation of the Guru Granth Sahib and the Dasam Granth for the twenty first century surely will, but Sikhs do not work through

* UK

committees. The Panth, and the academic world were fortunate in having, in Harbans Singh, the one man who could persuade a galaxy of authors, Sikh and non-Sikh to contribute articles, such was his standing and the respect and affection in which he was held. Glancing through the mass of files which filled the basement of the Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan and rooms in his home, it was impossible not to notice that he was not always served well by those who were invited to write articles. One contributor was honest enough to reply that the thousand words that he had been given were much too few to cover such an important subject. He, therefore, wrote 5000! It was left to sub editors to reduce the submission to the required length! The process did not end there. The edited version was received with courtesy and gratitude but then: perhaps in every case, the Professor himself, edited it and possibly rewrote it. On other occasions, material arrived four or five years late. Occasionally, nothing ever came. A new author had to be found or Harbans Singh had to write the article himself. Once a dreadful storm flooded the basement of the Bhavan and the files had to be rescued in a hurry, some were to be seen floating around the room. None was lost, but his colleague, Professor Harminder Singh Kohli spent an anxious time watching the soggy documents drying in the early autumn sun. Perhaps it was as well that Professor Harbans Singh seldom left his home at all. He may not have known how near the project came to disaster. In the Encyclopaedia's preface, Professor Harbans Singh gratefully acknowledges the help of the University authorities, but most of all his staff of faithful assistants, especially during the last years when he was almost incapacitated. It was at this time their loyalty and affection were most demonstrated.

The Encyclopaedia was not Harbans Singh's only work, of course. He wrote on Guru Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur, and Guru Gobind Singh as well as the poet Bhai Vir Singh, but it was probably three other books which brought him most to the attention of the west and introduced Sikhism to many non-Sikhs. His *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism* were deservedly well received as was his *Perspectives on Guru Nanak*, a collection of papers presented at an international conference to celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of Guru Nanak's birth. More personal is the *Heritage of the Sikhs* which he wrote in 1965 and reprinted with an additional chapter in 1984. This addition is well worth reading. It says much about the man. On June 7th 1984 Professor Harbans Singh was attending the Ph.D. award ceremony of

his son at Harvard University when one of his former colleagues whispered "the direst words I have ever heard. The Golden Temple has been attacked and Bhindranvale killed". The rest of the chapter is his personal commentary upon the events leading up to that tragedy and resulting from it. The fact that it is coloured by emotion renders it no less important than if it were a coldly logical and analytical. Its worth lies in the fact that its author was a keen observer of events and a patriotic Sikh.

Professor Harbans Singh was Khalsa College, Amritsar, and Harvard educated, studying there under the eminent Wilfred Cantwell Smith whose vision of Religious Studies he shared. A witness to this is the Gobind Singh Bhavan–architecturally, a land mark which is immediately noticed on entering the University campus. He, and Cantwell Smith envisaged it as a centre for inter-religious studies with a staff drawn from the world's major faiths. This aspiration was never fully realised. It must be a vision for others to turn into reality. There is only so much that one person, even Sardar Sahib, as he was affectionately known, can do in one lifetime! It is amazing that he achieved so much. He lived to see both his children make a mark in Sikh studies and to dangle his grand-daughter on his knee. That, I know, satisfied him as much as anything else that he did. We appreciate a scholar and a gentle man whose life commends the Sikh way of life as few others could.

The Journal of Religious Studies
Autumn 1998

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Professor Harbans Singh: A Tribute

*W. Owen Cole**

Perhaps I may, through your pages, offer a word of appreciation for the work and friendship of Professor Harbans Singh, an eminent academic and scholar.

His death, in May this year, brings to an end a long line of eminent Sikhs whose writings have given the study of the Sikh Religion a high place in the academic examination of the world's great faiths. He lived just long enough to complete his massive Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, overcoming two crippling strokes and the death of his lovely and beloved wife, Kailash, in order to accomplish a task for which the realm of scholarship indebted to him for generations to come.

Like many others, I have lost both an inspiration and a dear friend. It is to hope that *The Sikh Review* will honour itself and the Professor by dedicating a complete edition to him in the not far distant future.

The Sikh Review
September 1998

* UK

20

Professor Harbans Singh—A Rememberance

*Donald G. Dawe**

When word of Harbans Singh's passing reached me my thoughts turned back to our long years of friendship. We first met in September 1968 when Harbans and his beloved Kailash had just arrived at the Center for the Study of World Religions on the campus of Harvard University. He and I were to be Fellows of the Center for the academic year 1968-69. We were introduced at the Center by its director at the time, Professor Wilfred Cantwell smith. In his wonderfully gracious way Professor Smith suggested that Harbans Singh and I could help each other in our work. He suggested that perhaps we would also enjoy getting to know each other. This modest recommendation, made to both of us, proved to be a prophecy abundantly fulfilled in over thirty years of a friendship, both spiritual and intellectual. It was a friendship that reached out to include our wives and children, as we worked together in India and the United States.

While at the Harvard Center, Harbans Singh was writing his biography of Guru Nanak. He was thoughtfully and prayerfully working through the abundant testimony to Guru Nanak in legend, poetry and historical remembrance given by the *Janamsakhis*. His task was to forge from these traditional texts the life story of Guru Nanak in a form intelligible to his contemporaries whose minds had been shaped by modem historiography. This was not a task set by academic fashions but by the demands of the Sikh community in India and around the world. Could this new generation of Sikhs hear the story of their greatest Guru in ways that they understood and could illumine their lives with the light of truth he had seen? It was a responsibility he carried on through all of his historical writings on Sikh tradition and leaders.

* USA

The task he undertook was similar to the one in which the Christian community was involved in clarifying the remembrances of Jesus given in the New Testament into a form comprehensible to those of us who live in a world so distant from that of first century Palestine. Our hope was that some of the insights developed by the Christian community in its struggle to know Jesus historically could illumine the Sikh community in its effort to know Guru Nanak historically. Harbans Singh and I talked of the interpretive schemes and philosophical outlooks that allow us to interpret myth, legend and poetry by historical analysis, yet still to keep the light of faith these great spiritual teachers give us. His clear mind and bright spirit allowed him to find elusive truths and turn from distorting errors. In those months at Harvard and for the thirty years that have followed, Sikh and Christian shared not just learned information but the deep things of our faith and their traditions. All of us who have been his students, read his books and caught something of his spirit are thankful heirs to Harbans Singh's discernment and faith.

When we first met in 1968, I was very much a tyro in Indian studies. I was intrigued by the great philosophical interpreters of Indian religions who worked in the early twentieth century. I was studying Indian religious life through great philosophical texts and framed my understanding with lofty metaphysical ideas. Harbans Singh knew and championed all of this. But in a quietly persuasive way he pointed me beyond them. He showed me the heart of that tradition in the faith of the people. We went to shrines and tiny *gurudwaras*, to the Golden Temple and to humble homes to hear the Guru Granth Sahib read, Ardas recited and the hymns of divine love sung. Harbans Singh knew the heart of religion first-hand because it was his heart sustained by that love of God granted by the grace of the Guru. He taught me that all faith, even my faith as a theologian, was grounded not in philosophical abstractions but in the heart aflame with love for God. It was not a Christian telling a Sikh what to believe, but of a Sikh showing a Christian what is to be seen.

The crowning accomplishment of his life was the editorship of *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*. This was a task which drew not only on his immense learning but on his deep and wide friendships. But above all else, its successful completion revealed the place of trust he had in the Sikh community. At a time when community life is driven by tragic events, sectarian strife and personal animosities, Harbans

Singh remained a towering beacon of moral strength by which the rest of us could orient ourselves. As he worked on *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* to give his community of faith a comprehensive picture of itself, he was guided by the conviction that the only guarantee of truth is goodness. His honesty was his pathway to truth. The Eternal was present in him as transforming grace. Yet his devotion to truth did not make of him a man of cold intellect nor disdaining mien. God had given him the gift of love. It was a love that he poured out on wife, children, family, friends, colleagues and students.

We miss him. Yet we are relieved that his frail body is at last freed from suffering. We rejoice that his spirit is still with us, although he has entered that realm of light, where there is no shadow of turning. In eternity he is bound together with Kailash and all the others who have gone before. But above all else, by the grace of the Guru, he now sees face to face the Eternal God he for so long worshipped and served.

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A Tribute

*Noel Q. King**

At the glorious Punjabi moment of the victory of 1965 I came to visit the site of the then proposed Punjabi University. Registrar Professor Harbans Singh left everything else and showed me around. Sardarni ji Kailash opened her lovely home as if we were long expected guests. I returned again in 1971 and then nearly every other year. I learnt so much of their hospitality, both domestic and academic, that was unsurpassable. I considered Professor Harbans Singh's ideas of immense importance and used them in building Departments in Africa and USA. Later in life I felt very close to him for I had known what widowerhood meant. I pray I never have to learn other calamities for I know I would fail. I came again and found the Professor and staff of Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan as welcoming as ever. As a Fulbright Scholar and later I have found the people of the Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan superbly loving, imaginative and patient. Professor Harbans Singh's books are scholarly and elegant. Gentleness and sensitivity of our beloved professor flow in them. They have certainly played a part in making the Sikhs visible internationally. His final and classic editorial work *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* will remain unparalleled for many years to come.

I remember him with utmost affection as he becomes history.

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* USA

22

Professor Harbans Singh

*Pritam Singh**

It is believed that saints can conquer their spleens - no bitterness, no anger, no complaint against anybody. Unfortunately, I have not had the good fortune of meeting any such saint in my life. The best saint that I came across, was able to restrict the expression of his anger to only two physical symptoms - a few furrows on his forehead and a slight raise in the pitch of his voice. My friend, the late Professor Harbans Singh, was not a saint in the ordinary sense of the term, but what an immaculate saintliness characterized the whole being of this gem of a man! During my 50-year contact with him, there were ups and downs from my side. For example, in the initial stages of our contact, I regarded his over-courteousness as the artificial pose of a courtier of the Maharaja of Faridkot. But as our knowledge of each other grew, I realized to my discomfiture that it was my friend's innate nobility that expressed itself uniformly with the high and the low. His control over his nerves was really remarkable. I never found him ruffled, never agitated, never angry or even nasty over an omission or commission by any insider or outsider. He would receive, one and all, with a broad, ear-to-ear smile. When I was heading the Department of Guru Nanak Studies at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, he wanted me to write an entry for his Encyclopaedia of Sikhism. I could not say no to him but was unable to take the work in my hand on priority basis. He kept on reminding me in his usual gentle, persuasive way. He did not betray any sign of exasperation in his reminders. I am sure, if I were in his place, I would have lost my temper much earlier, but here was a person for whom the use of any type of oral or written abrasive signifier was alien. When I met him at Patiala during those days, he was full of his usual warmth and did not bring up the subject

* Patiala

of my inordinate delay in providing him the small entry for his Encyclopaedia. Once, he sent his book containing his translation of Bhai Vir Singh's poetry into English for review in the *Journal of Sikh Studies*, of which I was the Chief Editor at that time. I passed on the book to Dr. Tejwant Singh Gill, who was Reader in the Department of English at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. His review was unsparing, although S. Harbans Singh's command over English language had earned praise even from English men of letters. I let the review go without toning down the harsh judgement of the reviewer. My hunch was that the review might put a strain on the intimate quality of our relationship, but my fears only proved that I had failed to understand the stuff of which my friend was made of. When we met later, it was the same smile, the same effusive welcome, the same courtesy, the same home-made, very tasty snacks and the same 'only one more', repeated after every 'one more'. In three consective issues of *Arsee* monthly of Delhi, three of my pen-portraits of eminent Panjabi writers were published. I was overwhelmed when one fine morning, I received the following comment from him, "Your essays in the *Arsee* are worth framing in gold." Such was this person, called Harbans Singh - a perfect saint. He was a gentleman to the core, with inborn mastery over his passions. He was courtesy incarnate.

Among scores of other exemplary qualities, the quality that stood out eminently was his single–minded dedication to work. He had set his mind on projecting Sikhism to the English-knowing world through the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism. A special Department for his favourite project was started by Panjabi University, Patiala. Twice, probably thrice, he was offered vice-chancellorship of his University but he declined the offer. Day and night, he could be seen correcting and updating entries received from scholars all over the world. He had only a skeleton staff in the Department and when these helpers were recruited, they were all novices. He trained them and made his Department an oiled machine. But, generally speaking, it remained a single man's show. Not a word has gone into the four volumes of the Encyclopaedia without his prior scanning. The work was not finished when he reached the age of superannuation. He was requested to continue but against the post of a Research Fellow of the University which carried a fixed honorarium of Rs. 2500/- p.m. He ignored completely the status of the post and the paltry sum that it carried, but continued to work with the same zeal and enthusiasm as before. When

I came to know that S. Harbans Singh was being paid only the usual Research Fellow's allowance, I addressed an urgent letter to the Vice-Chancellor to raise the emoluments at least to the maximum of University Professor's grade. The Syndicate of the University, however, thought it fit to increase the amount only by Rs. 1000/- per month, thus raising the total emoluments to the level of an untrained daily labourer's wages! S. Harbans Singh was not bothered about the money part of his job. He was intent on completing the project within his life-time. He lost his dear wife, who left an unbridgeable void in his life, but he continued to work incessantly. He was smitten with paralysis, which affected every limb of his body and affected even his speech, but, thankfully, left his brain intact. He continued to work with the same zeal, dictating and correcting entries. He wrote letters without his signatures as his fingers refused to obey him. When he had despatched the last entry to the press, he sent me an unsigned letter expressing his joy that he had, at last, finished his work. I wanted him to begin writing in Panjabi, but, alas, death which overtook him soon after, did not allow him to do so. I am sure, if he had switched over to Panjabi, he would have introduced into this language the same sophistication and blemishless style as he had developed in English.

Twentieth century has been able to throw up a few encyclopaedic minds among the Sikhs, such as Bhai Vir Singh, Bhai Kahan Singh and Professor Teja Singh. The last in this illustrious series was Sardar Harbans Singh. It remains to be seen whether the twenty-first century, which is going to dawn within a few months from now, will be able to add substantially to this list.

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Autumn 1998

23

A Fragment of the Guru's Vision

*Gurbhagat Singh**

I met professor Harbans Singh for the first time at the residence of Dr. Ganda Singh on Lower Mall, Patiala. He was then Secretary of the Punjabi University Commission. His gentleness and sincerity attracted me magnetically. When he became officer-on-special-duty and then the Registrar of Punjabi University I began visiting him for advice on my literary career. When I left Patiala and moved to the University of Delhi to teach English literature he kept his interest in me. At the University of California that I had joined for my Ph.D., one day I surprisingly received a letter from Professor Harbans Singh inviting me to write an essay on Guru Gobind Singh's *Chandi Di Var* for *The Encylopaedia of Sikhism*. He was endowed with a profound intuition. If once he felt positive about someone, that was forever. Turmoils of time could not change him. He could intuit the essence of a human being to build up a vibrant relationship on it lasting for years.

The same quality of intuiting the essence is visible in what he wrote about. But to him the essence of a work gets its form in relation to its genetic culture and people. He admires Bhai Vir Singh, the don of modern Punjabi poetry because his language interacts with the cultural conditions of his age. This response-ability develops the "aesthetic conscience" of Bhai Vir Singh. In this typical simplicity, Harbans Singh relates the matters of culture, milieu and aesthetics to bring out the distinct genius of Bhai Vir Singh deeply influenced by the Sikh Gurus.

Harbans Singh's biographical works on the Sikh Gurus and his classic historical introduction to the Sikh patrimony, The *Heritage of the Sikhs*, are also marked by his subtle essence-recognition. He elaborates Guru Nanak's religion as "a matter of the heart and of ethical

* Patiala

conduct," and his genius as "artistic rather than philosophical." Harbans Singh has presented Maharaja Ranjit Singh also as the creator of sovereign "Punjabi nation." In his Berkeley lectures on Sikhism he distinguishes the Sikh identity for "religious faith." His synthetic consciousness, with an art of reconciling the historical relativist and essentialist positions, very appropriately probes his objects of investigation. In fact his sensitive meditative feeling or responsive subjectivity makes his style dramatically vibrant and literary. In the *Heritage* when he describes Guru Gobind Singh's historic moment of baptising the Khalsa on the Baisakhi of 1699 A.D., Harbans Singh is simply inimitable:

> The Guru remained absorbed for long intervals and the Sikhs noticed on his face the reflection of his deep meditations. He seemed to be occupied with an unfathomable inner wonder and mystery. The air of Anandpur was tense with anticipation. Everyone went about his task slightly subdued by the self-consciousness of the moment. A stillness permeated where used to be so much of energetic fun and gaiety—a stillness, which prefigured the birth of a momentous event.

Sardar Sahib's most cherished dream work to which he devoted about three decades of his life was *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* in four volumes. For its excellent editorial labour and information, the work will remain unmatched for decades. But the most incredible fact worth recording about it is the determination and will with which he completed it despite his paralytic stroke. It is a tribute to human spirit that shines through the prophetic poetry and lives of the Sikh Gurus, In his thoroughness, commitment and poet like sensitivity in what he did, Professor Harbans Singh was no less than a realized fragment of the Gurus' vision.

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Our Sardar Sahib

*Major Gurmukh Singh (Retd.)**

He was a perfect stranger to me untill I met him. But on the very first meeting my first impression was that his personality possessed a force that was simply irresistible.

Soon after I retired from the army in early 1976, I got an offer to join the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, a project of the Punjabi University. On enquiry, I came to know that the job involved survey of historical Gurdwaras throughout the country. The work, pilgrimage gratis of holy places, was alluring, but the salary offered was a meagre Rs. 600 a month. I was hesitant, but persuaded by Dr. Harkirat Singh, an old friend then Assistant Editor of the Encyclopaedia. I agreed to try for a six-month term on adhoc basis. It was then that he escorted me to Professor Harbans Singh, the Editor (or Sardar Sahib as everybody called him) for an 'interview'. We found him in a cubicle on the first floor of the Main Library, bent over a number of books lying open in front of him. Dr. Harkirat Singh duly introduced me and then:

> Sardar Sahib (with broad smile): "Ah, welcome! So you have decided to join us?"
>
> I: "Yes Sir! I shall try a six month term to see whether I can fit in. Meanwhile you may find a better man for the job".
>
> He: "We have found our man, and I am sure he will find the work interesting."

That was all the 'interview'. I was instantly won over.

Professor Harbans Singh, I soon learnt, commanded universal respect naturally, because, besides being an accomplished scholar, he as Member-Secretary of the University's establishment committee and then its first Registrar had truly been its architect. As time passed, I

* Patiala

found the Sardar Sahib to be a thorough gentleman, cultured, and a strict disciplinarian who would tolerate no nonsense. Always polite and soft-spoken, he was a hard taskmaster. Studious and hard-working himself, he expected, and also valued, extreme diligence and utmost thoroughness in his subordinates. The slightest doubt in facts or the minutest error in spellings or punctuation would result in the entries to be returned to the staff vetters for complete re-checking. He accepted nothing but the flawless. The Encyclopaedia was his brainchild and his commitment to it was total. He demanded the same sense of commitment from us. At the same time, he was considerate about our just needs. When, taking advantage of my presence in the university with ample spare time at my disposal, I joined the Correspondence Courses for post-graduation in English, he was not quite happy about it, and wanted me to literally a whole timer in the cause of the Encyclopaedia. But when I assured him that my private studies will not be at the cost on my official duties, and also reasoned that any improvement in my knowledge of English will only add to my ability to contribute to the cause of the Encyclopaedia, he readily agreed. Indeed, thence onward he guided and encouraged me to write independently. Meanwhile, he got me upgraded as Research Assistant and entrusted me with writing and vetting entries on topics other than historical shrines. I regarded him more as a teacher than a boss. And perhaps because of the fact that we were almost of the same age, he made me feel that the regard was mutual.

After his superannuation in March 1981, Sardar Sahib stopped coming to the Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan, though he continued to function as Editor-in-Chief of the Encyclopaedia working at his house, A-1, on the campus. I occasionally went, or was called, there to discuss or clarify some point or the other. I found that his life and ambience at home was as regular and disciplined, though a little less formal, as it had been in the Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan. Bibiji, as we called Mrs. Harbans Singh, was as graceful as he was gracious. She was a perfect match for her illustrious husband. With their son and daughter, both grown up and settled in the States, the couple lived a happy, contented and peaceful busy life.

A rare trait in Professor Harbans Singh, besides his allegiance to the literary muse, was his loyalty to his staff, a small team of half a dozen or so. Once engaged, he would let none of them part except when someone had to leave on promotion, in which case he was gladly

spared. I was going to be 60 in July 1981, and I wanted to quit in view of certain urgent and important responsibilities at home but Sardar Sahib would not let me go. He as Editor-in-Chief put up a case, in May itself, for my retention on contract basis. However, the university's Syndicate turned down the case and I started winding up work pending with me. But Sardar Sahib made me promise to continue, resubmitted the case and got it sanctioned in September 1981 with retrospective effect from August 2. During the late 1980s, I developed osteo-arthritis and requested to be relieved, but he would have none of it. He allowed me to work at home but would not listen to relieve me.

In 1989 Professor Harbans Singh himself got physically handicapped because of a severe attack of paralysis, but he would not spare himself too, and continued to observe the usual schedule of work and study. If anything, he took this stroke as a warning signal for the time running out fast, and he redoubled his effort and goaded his editorial team to do the same. As a result, the first volume of the Encyclopaedia was ready for the press by the beginning of 1992. Fate had yet a severe shock in store for him. The central pillar of his strength collapsed when his wife, Bibiji to us, passed away after a sudden brief illness on November 12, 1992. This tragedy really shook and shattered him. However, such was his determination and his dedication to his *magnum opus* that he by sheer force of will kept his end at bay till he had seen the final proofs of the text of the fourth and final volume of the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*. The inevitable happened at last on May 30, 1998.

My last impression about Sardar Sahib was not entirely new to me. It was the immense popularity and the very wide circle of friends, acquaintances and admirers that he had had. The gatherings that I witnessed at his cremation and during the obsequies only confirmed that impression and added to my admiration for him.

A gem of a man was Sardar Sahib Professor Harbans Singh!

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Professor Harbans Singh: A True Embodiment of Sikh Tradition

*B.S. Bhatia**

Profeesor Harbans Singh will be remembered for a long time to come as an extraordinary scholar who had devoted himself over the past five decades to writing about Sikhism and Punjabi literary studies like an ascetic. The most convincing proof of his peerless competence and steadfast diligence in his *magnum opus*, *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* in four volumes to which he had devoted himself with a sense of unflinching commitment and sincerity of purpose. *The Heritage of the Sikhs* written by him is a work which passes the strict test laid down by Trevelyan for an historiographer who combined knowledge of the evidence with the largest intellect, the warmest human sympathy and highest imaginative powers. It is all the more important that this is the first consolidated and comprehensive account of the Sikhs' religious, cultural and political history. His book entitled *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith* is very well written and can be definitely commended both as the best short study of Guru Nanak's life, times, and doctrine which has so far appeared, and as an brilliant example of modern Sikh scholarship. Besides this his *Berkley Lectures on Sikhism* delivered at the University of California at Berkley in 1992 and published in the book form is, in reality, a historical primer on five hundred years of Sikhism from 1469-1969. His book entitled Bhai Vir Singh was written in the birth centenary year of the poet in which he kept a balance between the critical values and reverential imagination between Judgement and idolatry.

Apart from these academic attainments, Professor Harbans Singh was a soft-spoken, gentle and humorous man and was a true embodiment of Sikh tradition. He was very unassuming person whose

* Patiala

love for healthy academic, ethical and moral values was well-known. He never compromised with the unhealthy values of the consumer society which became the main cause of total degradation of all sorts of good values well-identified with Indian culture. As a role-model, he inspired many young scholars to follow his footsteps under his able guidance. That is why he has left behind a large number of his admirers and friends.

The Journal of Religious Studies
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Our Beloved Sardar Sahib

*Darshan Singh**

Professor Harbans Singh passed away on May 30, 1998 at the ripe age (born on March 6, 1921) but not before correcting the final proofs of his four volume *magnum opus*: *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*. Professor Harbans singh was a man of futuristic vision and deep commitments. All through the vicissitudes of life he led a dignified, dedicated and disciplined life. He spent almost half a century of active academic life to promote Punjabi studies, Sikh history and the Sikh Studies with a single–minded devotion. His ceaseless efforts bore bountiful fruits and he succeeded in carving out a secure and respectable place for the Sikh studies on the academic map of the study of World Religions. In addition to his *Encyclopaedia* he has also produced more than a dozen scholarly books devoted to the sacred lives and mission of the Sikh Gurus such as Guru Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh, the Sikh savant Bhai Vir Singh and the Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh etc. Not even a single significant event associated with the Sikh History and Sikh studies escaped his discerning eye.

Professor Harbans Singh had many firsts in his life. He was the Member–Secretary of the Punjabi University Commission, its first Registrar, first Professor of Sikhism, first Head of the Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies (first unique department in the Indian universities founded with his efforts) and the founder–editor of *The Journal of Religious Studies*. Not only the Punjabi University, Patiala, he was also instrumental in mooting the idea of establishing Guru Nanak Dev University at Amritsar. In his dedication to the cause of promotion Of Punjabi literature, Sikh history and the Sikh studies he never allowed temptations of power and pelf in deviating him from

* Patiala

his well perceived goal. He inspired a whole younger generation of the Sikh scholars. He lived a saintly life and died like a Rishi without leaving behind any property, bank balance and a house of his own. Today at the close of the second millennium and the dawn of the third millennium, we members of his small academic community remember him with respect and pride.

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An Encyclopaedist Par Excellence

*Gur Rattan Pal Singh**

I had the privilege to meet Professor Harbans Singh in the year 1963. I had accompanied Sirdar Kapur Singh who had an important engagement with Professor Sahib. Meeting the Professor was an exhilarating experience, the details of which stand burnt deep into my memory.

Professor Harbans Singh was affectionate, courteous and well-mannered. Listening to him was an education and everyone present in his company felt exalted, elated and enlightened. So was the case with Sirdarni Harbans Singh who radiated confidence, goodwill and friendliness. The couple was, indeed, highly hospitable and generous. They always insisted in befriending the persons who came in contact with them.

With the sad and untimely demise of Professor Habans Singh on May 30, 1998, the country has lost an eminent scholar, an exemplary academician and an encyclopaedist par excellence.

He was a symbolic representation of scholarliness, gentlemanliness, honesty and dedication, and one was sure to be struck as to how his small head could carry all he knew and that too for so long. There is no dichotomy, rather there is a perfect harmony, between his literary and spiritual credentials. Indisputably, few among the living Sikhs are better suited than the Professor to chronicle the ministry and estate of Sikhism.

So far as exegesis and exposition of the Sikh thought and theology are concerned, Professor Harbans Singh had no rival. His work passes the strict test laid down by Trevelyan for a historian: One who combined the knowledge of evidence with the largest intellect, the warmest human sympathy and the highest imaginative power. Professor

* Chandigarh

Harbans Singh prepared a four volume *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* in English.

Professor Harbans Singh was a Visiting Fellow at Harvard Universtiy (Center for the Study of World Religions). Mr. Eldon R. Ray, Mount Alison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada, had paid the most glorifying tribute to the Professor: "Professor Harbans Singh is a scholarly, soft-spoken, gentle and humourous man - very warm and humane - and very much Sikh. What impressed me about Harbans Singh was his faith, his humanity, his openness. He is a well-recognised scholar of Sikhism and has written widely and well. What impressed me about Harbans Singh, the Sikh, was Harbans Singh the man. To meet such a person is to emerge a bigger, better person oneself."

On January 17, 1981, Paniabi University, Patiala awarded life fellowship to professor Harbans Singh in view of his outstanding work in the field of Sikh history, religion and literature. Mr. Khushwant Singh, the renowned Sikh and journalist, pays compliments to the Professor with the following words: "A start has been made by the Punjabi University at Patiala to produce *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*. Harbans Singh, Professor, of English, who has been a Fellow at Harvard, lecturer at Berkeley, McGill and many other well-known universities, is its Editor-in-Chief. He is the right man for the job. How many professors are there who turn down offers of Vice-Chancellorship? Harbans Singh refused one offered to him on a platter. He preferred to go on teaching and compiling material for his encyclopaedia. It is to have over 4000 entries dealing with every aspect of the life of the community, its history, politics, literature, art, culture. I do not know where he will find 4000 contributors who have the discipline required to write factual, accurate and unbiased pieces in the exact number of words prescribed."

Similarly, Mr. K.S. Duggal, a well-known writer and now a member of Rajya Sabha, also paid high tributes to the Professor: "ProfessorHarbans Singh belongs to the class of eminent Punjabi literati like Principal Teja Singh and Professor Gurbachan Singh 'Talib' who were more interested in projecting and thus enriching the Punjabi literary milieu. This is exactly how Professor Harbans Singh started his scholarly career. A teacher by profession, he translated into English a number of promising contemporary writers whether they were poets like Mohan Singh and Amrita Pritam or short story writers like

Gurmukh Singh Musafir and Kulwant Singh Virk. Later, he rendered into English excerpts from Bhai Vir Singh's *magnum opus*, *Rana Surat Singh* with distinction. And he wrote a series of highly researched books, such as, *Guru Nanak and orgins of the Sikh Faith, Guru Tegh Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Bhai Vir Singh.*"

Professor Singh had a perfect mastery of both languages—English and Punjabi and he responded most spontaneously to the humane and the tender, the poignant and the delicate. The ease and felicity with which he strikes upon the most apt and delectable English equivalents for the Punjabi phrase and figure of speech are most unique and remarkable.

The untimely and unexpected death of Sirdami Harbans Singh, the most dedicated and exceptionally talented lady, gave the biggest jolt to his otherwise happy and well-contended life.

Although the Professor was confined to bed because of a paralytic stroke, yet he continued to be mentally alert till the last breath of his life. He is survived by his son, Nripinder, who holds a doctoral degree and is the author of the *Sikh Moral Tradition*, while the daughter Nikky Gunindar Kaur, teaches religion and philosophy at Colby College in the United States. She is the author of several research articles and three books including *The Guru Granth Sahib: Its Physics and Metaphysics, Sikhism and the Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision*.

The Professor was, indeed, a God-fearing person. About the man of faith Allama Iqbal writes:

> *Jahaan mein ahl-a-eeman soorat-e-khursheed jeetay hein,*
> *Idhar doobay, udhar niklay udhar doobay idhar niklay.*

(In this world men of faith survive like the sun. Drowned at one end they emerge at the other, sunk this side they prop up at the other.)

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Professor Harbans Singh: In Memoriam

*H.S. Virk**

When I joined Punjabi University, Patiala in October. 1965, Professor Harbans Singh was Registrar of the university. I did not bother to meet him as our department was functioning in the premises of Thapar College of Engg. and Technology while the university was operating from Baradari Palace of Maharaja of Patiala in the Baradari gardens. The first occasion to see Professor Sahib was on the eve of retirement of Professor Ganda Singh, the greatest Sikh historian of Punjab. Professor Harbans Singh impressed me by his urbanity, oratory and culture which are rare gifts to discover in our university doyens.

In October 1970, I was offered a French Govt. Scholarship to pursue my doctoral studies in France. I called on Professor Harbans Singh before leaving India. This meeting proved to be a blessing in disguise. Professor Singh enquired about my programme and gave me a letter of recommendation in name of one Dr. Sham Lal Malick. He also asked me to select some books on Sikh religion from his personal collection. I picked up three: a monograph on Guru Nanak, in French, *One Hundred Questions on Sikhism* by G.S. Mansukhani and *The Book of Ten Masters* by Professor Puran Singh. My parents were quite nervous on my departure to France and expressed their apprehension whether I stay as a Gursikh during my sojourn abroad. Professor Singh reassured them by telling that your son will not only remain a Sikh in Paris University but he will convert many others to the Sikh-fold.

After reaching Paris, the most difficult job was to search for a suitable research guide who could also act as a thesis supervisor. Almost

* Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

all the Indian scholars were dispatched to Rouen to undergo French language course for one year before starting doctoral studies. I met Dr. Malick, from Nabha, who was a family friend of Professor Singh, and delivered the letter. He told me not to leave for Rouen and stay put in Paris to start my doctoral research without wasting one year on learning French language. The same evening Dr. Malick found Professor Max Morand, next door to his laboratory. who accepted me as one of his Ph.D. students. Thus I saved one precious year of my academic career and I was the first Indian to complete my doctoral studies within two years, earning a citation '*Tres Honorable*', the highest award in France. Professor Malick and his research team were my constant companions in Paris University and his wife Lata was always pleased to serve me Indian food whenever I called on them.

When I recall the role played by this letter of Professor Harbans Singh in moulding my academic career, in the university of Paris, I bow my head in deep gratitude to this gem of a man.

When Professor Abdus Salam received the Nobel Prize. Professor Singh rang me up and congratulated me. He knew my friendship with Professor Salam. A few years back, Professor Salam was struck by a paralytic stroke. Professor Singh always enquired about his health and the type of treatment given to him. Professor Harbans Singh felt reassured to know the well-being of his Nobel Laureate friend. Both of them suffered from the same disease with identical symptoms, and both continued to work under the most trying circumstances till the end of their life's journey.

I was Dean, Academic Affairs of Guru Nanak Dev University when Professor Harbans Singh was conferred a D.Litt degree (Honoris Causa). He could not attend the university convocation due to ill health. The Vice-Chancellor deputed me and Dr. Mohan Singh Johal, the Registrar of the university to present the degree and academic robes to Professor Singh. A ceremonial function was held at his Punjabi University residence and I saw a gleam of joy among his close friends and admirers who gathered to celebrate the occasion.

Professor Singh was very particular to reply to each and every letter I wrote. He got his letters typed but left them unsigned after he was struck by the paralytic stroke. His last wish, to complete the monumental work of writing the *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, has been

fulfilled. I too was asked to write entries: one on Professor Bawa Kartar Singh and the other on Professor Rama Chandra. He promptly accepted these entries and thus I could participate in this great venture of Professor Harbans Singh for the sacred cause of Sikh religion and culture.

He will live and shine through the pages of Sikh history and the *Encyclopedia of Sikhism* forever.

The Sikh Review
August 1998

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The Late Professor Harbans Singh

*Amar Singh Chhatwal**

I am deeply grieved to know about the passing away of Professor Harbans Singh. He was an authority on the Sikh religion and literature. I had made a point, whenever in India, to visit him in Patiala. Last winter (1997-98) I spent a whole day with him. Though stricken with disability, he was mentally alert, even cheerful. His sad demise, besides being a personal loss, is a severe set-back to the stream of Sikh religious literature. May his soul rest in peace in Akal Purukh's care!

The Sikh Review
September 1998

* London

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Professor Harbans Singh

*Dr. Amarjit Singh Buttar**

I associate myself with the tribute paid by *The Sikh Review* to the legendary Professor Harbans Singh, Editor-in-chief, *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, who passed away last May.

Sitting so far away from the Sikh heartland, it is *The Sikh Review* that brings much needed information about happenings. I had never met Professor Harbans Singh but known his writings for the last 40 years, as also his many accomplishments. Of all the noted scholars of Sikhism in the twentieth century, Harbans Singh certainly stands next in line with Max Arthur Macauliffe, Professor Sahib Singh and Gyani Manmohan Singh. This is by no means to belittle the contribution of hundreds of other writers and researchers. He will not only be remembered but sorely missed.

The Sikh Review
November 1998

* USA

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Professor Harbans Singh (1921-1998): A Daughter's Homage

*Nikki Guninder Kaur Singh**

From Lord Buddha and from modern thinkers like T.S. Eliot, we learn that "human beings cannot bear very much reality." Today is my father's tenth death anniversary—a harsh reality of my terrible loss. Were I in the Punjab, I would have been able to share my grief with family and friends. I would have visited the Gurdwara Sahib for solace. I would have heard *kirtan* to uplift my spirits. But living in remote Waterville, on the East coast of America, I find myself in an entirely different situation.

And so I pick up a book authored by my father, and create the illusion of his presence. Memory after all is not a cognitive recollection but a reliving of the past - an awakening of the consciousness to prior events, a vibrant recreation of moments that are no more. I can clearly see Dad. He had the writing bug, a severe one too. Even when he had enormous administrative duties he would stay up late into the night to keep up with his prolific scholarship in Sikh history and literature by writing books, contributing articles to leading journals and newspapers, translating Punjabi authors into English, and editing collections of poetry, short-stories, essays, and conference papers. He devoted the last decades of his life meticulously researching Sikh history and editing the *Encyclopedia of Sikhism.* Whether writing or editing, he checked up on every single fact; mulled over every word; shaped each sentence to perfection with a sculptor's chisel. Sound and sense were vitally important to him, and a keen aesthetic sensibility pervades his works of history, fiction, and poetry.

Eerily, just yesterday, I received a copy of Dad's *Heritage of the Sikhs* from Paul Courtright, an eminent Professor of Religious Studies

* USA

at Emory University. The book had been signed by my father and presented to Paul when he visited our home in Patiala as an undergraduate student, more than forty years ago! Paul wanted me to have the precious memento. As I hold this text in my hands, I feel my father's presence in a profound way. When did Dad write the *Heritage of the Sikhs*? Where? What pen was he using? Dad did have an obsession for pens, and oddly enough, after collecting Parkers and Mont Blancs for years, he developed a craze for cheap American flair pens! Dad also loved to have his family and close friends around him while he himself was immersed in his writing. I have often wondered how he could focus so intently and produce so voluminously with all the hustle bustle around him - even occasionally joining in on conversations and cracking a joke here and there. A cup of tea would invariably sit beside him, which nobody was allowed to remove. He'd keep sipping that cold insipid tea as he merrily wrote on and on. As I touch my father's book I have the illusion of his being here and now, with my mother, brother, Chachaji, and grandmother cozily gathered around.

In the printed words I hear his voice and breath. In the visual, perceptual, syntactic, and semantic process of reading, I embrace my father. Clearly, there is a close bond between any reader and author, and reading, as we all know, is much more than just a cerebral process. But when the writer happens to be one's own father, the text becomes a more powerful medium, and the author-reader relationship acquires a greater intimacy.

Dad's various works resonate differently with me, and they evoke different emotions. l feel extremely proud to read his brilliant insights on different aspects of Sikhism. He was devoted to his faith, and yet he approached the tradition with a historian's critical and objective eye. I deeply admire the balanced way he brings out, for example, the significance of *janamsakhi* accounts. I also enjoy his vivid visual, aural, and tactile descriptions in which historical figures emerge as three-dimensional characters. The sumptuous marriage of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's grandson Naunihal, for instance, is recorded in such extraordinary detail that a reader physically gasps—at times in joy and at times in horror - at the sheer flamboyance of the royal ceremonies! In addition to his scholarly output, Dad left behind a vital literary legacy. I derive a wonderful artistic delight from his translations of sacred and secular poetry, and continue to marvel at the accuracy

and beauty of his English renderings of the original Punjabi verse. Born in the village of Kotha Guru, educated in Punjabi schools, he had a real sensitivity for Punjabi literature and communicated it in impeccable English.

I may not be on my coveted evening walk with him, but the moment I begin to read his works I am magically transported to my childhood routine—I am tightly holding his hand and Dad is telling me interesting events from our Sikh past. The illusion is quite real. I palpably feel the warmth of the hand that wrote the page. Dad did not depart ten years ago. Across the chasms of time and space, he is very much here, inspiring me with his love and knowledge. As the Boddhisattva Vimalakirti reassuringly explains, "reality is illusion; illusion is reality."

The Sikh Review
August 2008

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Professor Harbans Singh: A Brief Portrait

*Dharam Singh**

I

The name of Professor Harbans Singh (1921-1998) is highly respected in academic and social circles for his rich contribution to Sikh scholarship and Punjabi literary studies on the one hand and for his suave sophisticated manner in personal life on the other. This much revered and distinguished scholar enjoyed, especially during the last about three decades of the twentieth century, a vital and pervasive influence in the fields of Religious Studies/Sikh studies. Through his works written with incisive insight and meticulous thoroughness, he acquired a unique prestige in the world of learning. He was able to earn for himself a niche, high enough to be the envy of any academic, in the halls of learning in India and abroad. His profound scholarship and his selfless commitment to his work earned him bouquets from a wide variety of critics, and his mastery over language, particularly English, and his precise and immaculate expression have been such as to earn for him in the very beginning of his career a well-deserving remark that 'he set a very high standard of writing in English even for a Western author.'

Professor Harbans Singh was a product of the creative ferment enlivened in the Khalsa College Amritsar, during the early forties of the twentieth century. He imbibed early in his career an engaging interest in and deep love for letters. He was motivated throughout his life by one single passion to serve the world of scholarship with his prolific pen. So total, so unreserved was his commitment to the cause that no lure or handicap was powerful enough to draw him away from his work. He never succumbed to the pressures of physical disability

* Patiala

or emotional distress and personal tragedies that became his lot during last few years of his life. He was unobtrusive by nature and preferred to work away from the limelight or lure of positions. He pursued his literary and scholarly pursuits in a selfless manner and studious way, keeping his office as well as his home ever open.

II

Professor Harbans Singh was born on 6 March 1921 at Kotha Guru, the ancestral village of his mother in the present-day Bathinda district of the Punjab. His father, Ram Lal, was a junior revenue official and a man of strong character and literary tastes. It was from his father that Harbans Singh inherited the art of making friends and of being warmly hospitable to each and every guest visiting him. His mother, Roop Kaur, a direct descendent of the Gurus, was a lady of deep religious convictions. This petite and graceful lady played a vital role in shaping and moulding the religious and moral zeitgeist and artistic sensibilities of her son. Those who have had an opportunity to meet that frail-looking, soft-spoken and God-fearing lady can easily discern her imprint on her son's personality and temperament.

Harbans Singh began his schooling in the village school and went over to the Khalsa School, Muktsar, as a sixth standard students and from here he passed his matriculation examination. One of his old school teachers at Muktsar once recalled that Harbans Singh had not by that time studied Punjabi. In the sixth class he learnt enough of Punjabi to be square with other students and stood first in the subject every year from the next class. After completing his schooling, he joined the Khalsa College at Amritsar in 1937. The Khalsa College, Amritsar, established in 1882, was not only the premier Sikh educational institution but also premier among such institutions in the region. Harbans Singh graduated from this college with Honours in English in 1941 and completed his Master's in English Literature in 1943. The College authorities realized the potential of this young student and offered him a lectureship in the College even before the result of Master's degree was out.

It was during his days at the Khalsa College that Harbans Singh developed long-lasting friendships with some of his class or college mates. Some of these friends rose to very high positions in different walks of life. To quote a few names: Dr. Amrik Singh (famous educationist and former Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University,

Patiala), Dr. D.S. Maini (Professor of English, Punjabi University), Dr. Fauja Singh (Professor of History, Punjabi Univesity), Dr. Gurbax Singh (Professor of Chemistry and former Vice-Chancellor, Delhi University), Sardar Dilbir Singh (industrialist at Amritsar), Dr. Gurdial Singh Dhillon (Speaker, Lok Sabha), Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib (a Sikh theologian and exegete) and Parkash Singh Badal (former Chief Minister of Punjab). Of these friends, only Parkash Singh Badal came from outside the Khalsa College circle: he studied at the Sikh National College, Lahore, but often visited Amritsar which resulted in several life-long associations with the old Khalsas. His admiration of and respect for Harbans Singh increased with each passing year and he has remained a great admirer of the Professor's scholarship and integrity of character. It was also at the Khalsa College that Professor Harbans Singh developed an interest in the game of hockey though he himself did not play much of it. His love for the game and his desire to raise its standards earned him the president-ship of the Khalsa College Hockey Club (1943-44). He also remained President of the College Students Association for a year in 1942.

Professor Harbans Singh taught at the Khalsa College for one academic session only, and went over next year to join as Head of the Department of English at Brijindra College, Faridkot – an offer made by the ruler of the erstwhile Faridkot princely State. His tenure at Faridkot was rewarding in more ways than one. During this time he held assignments including the one of tutor to the heir-apparent to the Faridkot throne that provided him leisure the kind of which he could perhaps never afford again in his life that had been full of academic and professional responsibilities. Leisure coupled with princely comforts and facilities could have led him into luxury and laxity, but Harbans Singh was not made of ordinary stuff. He made full use of the time at his disposal to study and reflect on the cultural heritage of the Sikhs. To my mind, it was during this while that he delved deep into literature dealing with Sikhism and other religions, and he had had the dream which later on saw its realization in the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism.

He served as Principal of Government College, Muktsar, for a while (1958-60) before taking over as Member-Secretary of the Punjabi University Commission set up in 1960. Since the idea was to establish a University in the Malwa region of the Punjab for the development, growth and spread of Punjabi language, literature and culture, Harbans

Singh was an apt choice to work with Maharaja Yadavinder Singh of Patiala who happened to be the Chairman of this Commission. Harbans Singh deserved this position for reasons more than one. Apart from the fact that he belonged to the region, he had also maintained from the very beginning of his career an abiding and engaging interest in the Punjabi literary renaissance coupled with his thoroughly meticulous style and a very charming personal manner.

When the University came into being in 1962, he was offered the office of Registrar of the University. He was initially reluctant to accept this offer and, as some family sources revealed, even 'tapped' some sources who could possibly help him wriggle out of it. Perhaps he had a lurking apprehension in some recesses of his conscious mind that the rough and tumble world of administration would leave him no time for his academic pursuits and that it might also blunt his creative sensibility. However, his integrity of character, administrative acumen and suavity of manner made him the best choice with the authorities that be. As Registrar, he along with some other administrators of Indian universities visited America to study the administrative functioning and educational system of universities there. He compiled his impressions of this visit, and the resultant book, *Higher Education in America* (1966) has been appreciated for its informative and educative value. By this time, he had to his credit *Aspects of Punjabi Literature* and several other booklets such as the ones on the religious heritage of Amritsar and Anandpur, history of Faridkot State, and so on.

III

Although Harbans Singh was a student of English literature, he got interested in the Punjabi literary renaissance early in his career. Punjabi studies was, no doubt, his first love and he has never completely forgotten it though he dedicated mature years, the days of enthusiastic and dispassionate scholarship to enriching the field of Sikh studies. Soon after he Officer on Special Duty and the task assigned to him was to prepare a biography of Guru Gobind Singh the tercentenary of whose birth fell that year. His biography of the Tenth Master, written originally in English, was first published by the then newly established Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Chandigarh. The book was also translated and published into all major Indian languages such as Assamese (tr. Narayan Dass), Bengali (tr. Upendra Kumar

Das), Gujarati (A.B. Yajnik), Hindi (Devendra Satyarathi, the famous Indian folklorist), Kannada (D.R. Bondre), Kashmiri (Bansi Nirdosh, a well-known short-story writer), Maithali (Ramanath Jha), Malayalam (N. Balakrishan Nair, poet), Marathi (Madhav Manohar, writer and critic), Orya (M. Mansinha, educationist and scholar), Punjabi (Attar Singh, a leading critic in Punjabi), Sanskrit (Shrutikant Sharma who rendered the biography in verse), Sindhi (N.Y. Sadarangani), Tamil (R. Ramanujachari) and Telugu (B. Rama Raju).

It was also around this time that Religion was being introduced as a subject of academic study in colleges and universities of the West. He also utilized this time to reflect on the possibilities of starting a department for the study of Religion though this was completely a novel idea in the Indian context. Soon a skeleton staff started working as a sort of preparation of groundwork for the establishment of a full-fledged department for the study of Religions. The real incentive, however, came from his visit in 1968-69 as a Fellow in the Centre for the Study of World Religions at the Harvard University in the United States. His stay at the Harvard proved twice-blessed for the Punjabi University: Harbans Singh was now able to form a clear idea of the establishment of such a department to introduce Religion as a subject of academic study at the college and university levels. Second, he utilized the stay to complete the biography of Guru Nanak – a project especially assigned to him by the Punjabi University. The book, Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith, was first published in English in 1969 to coincide with Guru Nanak's 500th birth anniversary celebrations. Later on, it was published in Hindi and Urdu as well. Portions of it were also rendered into French and some other European languages. The Times Literary Supplement took notice of the book and held it to be 'excellently written' and as one that 'can be confidently commended both as the best short study of Guru Nanak's life, times and doctrine which has so far appeared, and as an outstanding example of modern Sikh scholarship.' The book is not just a factual history of Guru Nanak. More significant than trying to reconstruct such a history after sifting fact from fiction and myth is the author's attempt to take into account the impact of Guru Nanak on the lives of men, particularly those who lived within a century after his death.

He returned from Harvard University in 1969 and immediately after his arrival on the campus, he had to look after the arrangements of the international seminar on Guru Nanak scheduled for September:

in fact, the year 1969 was being celebrated by the Sikh community as the quincentenary of the birth of the Guru. The seminar was attended by known scholars and academics from all over the world, and Harbans Singh later edited the proceedings of the seminar and got them published under the title Perspective on Guru Nanak (1975). As it is, the book comprises fifty-four essays on different aspects of Guru Nanak's life and doctrine by scholars from within India and abroad.

Punjabi University, Patiala, offered Harbans Singh towards the end of 1969 the position of Professor and chairman of the Department of Religious Studies at the University - the first ever department of its kind in any Indian university and a set-up for the establishment of which he had earlier played a pioneering role. He joined the Department on 1July 1970, under his stewardship, it acquired for itself a place of honour and eminence in the world of learning in India and abroad. The Department and the Department's bi-annual journal, *Journal of Religious Studies* soon became synonymous with his name. It was also around this time that Religion was being introduced as a subject of study at the graduate and postgraduate levels, and Punjabi University was among the pioneers to introduce it. Professor Harbans Singh was fully seized of the scarcity of reading material for students opting for this discipline at colleges. Therefore, he immediately took upon the task and first of all prepared, in collaboration with L.M. Joshi, *An Introduction to Indian Religions* which was to serve as a text-book for the first year students. Professor Harbans Singh had already published his *Heritage of the Sikhs* (1965) which has not several editions since then, each edition having significant additions and revisions. The book is a comprehensive and objective analysis of Sikh history, beginning with its origins and the latest edition takes it up to 1984. The book passes the strict test laid down by Trevelyan for a historian – 'one who combined knowledge of the evidence with the largest intellect, the warmest human sympathy and highest imaginative powers. The book can well be called the first consolidated account of the religious, cultural and political history of the Sikhs.

Religion had already been introduced as a subject of study in some of the colleges affiliated with Punjabi University when the study of religion as an academic discipline was yet unable to secure, in other Indian universities, for itself the status which legitimately belonged to it. Of course, the Punjabi University had made a beginning to

consolidate academic opinion in favour making this aspect of human experience the subject of serious intellectual and scholarly enquiry. The dearth of literature for students at the postgraduate and doctoral levels was felt: the University's Department of Religious Studies had already introduced a teaching-cum-research course for the degree of M.Litt., a two-year course midway between M.A. and Ph.D. The Department organized a seminar on the theme of 'Approaches to the Study of Religion': about twenty papers presented by known scholars in the field of philosophy of Religion were edited by Harbans Singh, and the book has since become Bible for the students working in this area. The *Journal of Religious Studies*, a bi-annual journal which he founded, carried scholarly articles for the benefit of teachers and students. The *Journal*, which remained synonymous with the name of Harbans Singh, was acclaimed internationally among scholars for the quality of its contents and objectivity of approach. A series on important personages from Indian and Semitic traditions was also started and monographs in the series included those on Kabir, Mansur al-Hallaj, *et al*.

Professor Harbans Singh used his good offices to invite several scholars to invite scholars specializing in different aspects of the study of Religion to give lectures to the students in the Department. Dr. Lowell Bloss gave lectures in the theories of religion, and these lectures were published under the title *Theories of Religion* (1978). Dr. David Harned worked on his book which the Department published under the title *Grace and Common Life* (1970). He also continued a very good rapport with the Harvard University's Center for the Study of World Religions where he had earlier spent time working on his biography of Guru Nanak. He was able to establish a mutual-exchange programme of scholars: under this scheme, several scholars from the US came to the Department and some researchers from the Department also went over as Fellows to the Harvard University. Prolific writer as Professor Harbans Singh was, he also did a book on Bhai Vir Singh which was assigned to him by the Indian Sahitya Akademi. The book, which has been commended as "undoubtedly among the most competently written", has been one in the series on eminent men of letters in all Indian languages. Around this time, he also collaborated with his colleague and old teacher, Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib, to do another book on Bhai Vir Singh which is published under the title Bhai *Vir Singh: Poet of the Sikhs*. He also rendered into English

excerpts from *Rana Surat Singh*, an epic in Punjabi by Bhai Vir Singh. A festschrift, *Punjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh* (1976), which he edited along with N.G. Barrier, celebrates a widely acknowledged fact of Dr. Ganda Singh being a vital influence in historical scholarship in the Punjab.

Now that several text books and others had become available to the students and teachers, Harbans Singh felt the need for a comprehensive reference book for students and scholars. The only encyclopaedic work on Sikhism had been Bhai Kahn Singh's *Gurushabad Ratanakar Mahan Kosh*. As it happened, it was more an encyclopaedia, in Punjabi, of Sikh literature and Harbans Singh felt that an encyclopaedia of Sikh religion, in English, was needed as Sikhism which had so far only generated curiosity among the Western scholars had now become a topic of serious study by scholars outside the tradition and unfamiliar with Punjabi language. His brief stint as Chairman of the newly established Department of Religious Studies made him acutely realize the lack of it. When he submitted to the University a blue-print of the Encyclopaedia project, the University took pleasure in assigning the project to him. Obviously, single-minded devotion, meticulousness in every aspect of the work was required to accomplish such a long-drawn and arduous project. Therefore, he decided to free himself from all administrative and other engagements: he not only resigned the chairmanship of the Department but also declined – twice – the offer of Vice-Chancellorship of the University that came to him in later years.

As the work on the Encyclopaedia was underway, two tragedies struck Harbans Singh. He suffered a paralytic stroke and then lost his wife. The latter emotionally shattered him but was able to cope with the physical disability. The way he continued working for the completion of his dream project in spite of his handicap reminded one of Rabindranath Tagore who also suffered a stroke in 1940. Although Tagore could never recover the full use of his faculties thereafter, he was 'soon able to sit up in bed and to talk. His hand was not steady enough to hold the pen, but since words and rhymes kept on buzzing in his head, he had to dictate the poems." Similarly, unmindful of his physical disability, Harbans Singh remained completely involved in the challenging task. He was able to complete the project before death overtook him though the fourth volume was published posthumously.

IV

Harbans Singh was a widely travelled person, lecturing audiences and holding dialogues with distinguished men from a wide variety of religions, cultures and regions. He was one of the administrators of some of the Indian universities to visit, in 1966, American universities to study their administrative functioning and educational system. He was a Fellow, in 1968-69, at the Centre for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, US. He was also a member of the World Council of Religion for Peace, and remained closely involved in its activities. He attended its sessions at Kyoto (Japan) in 1970 and at Leuven (Belgium) in 1974. Incidentally, the Kyoto conference concluded with the ardas or Sikh prayer said by Professor Harbans Singh: of course, the prayer was offered in English translation of the original in Punjabi. He was also invited in 1972 to the Conference on Non-Violent Transformation of Society at Driebergen (Holland) where he presented the Sikh perspective of religion's role in the creation of a non-violent and peaceful egalitarian social structure. He also delivered a series of lectures at the University of Berkeley (USA): these lectures were later published under the title *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism*.

V

Professor Harbans Singh the scholar was as venerable as loving and lovable was Harbans Singh the man. Among his admirers can be included people holding very high positions in different walks of life. The fact that many scholars whom he initiated into the scholarly exploration of a tradition to which he himself has made such an outstanding contribution and his innumerable admirers many of whom owe their success in life to the inspiration and guidance they received from him always touched his feet. This reflected the esteem he enjoyed as a friend, philosopher and guide. Arming himself with the doctrine of 'goodwill to all'—a principle of the Sikh faith, he ever refrained from entering into polemics. Harbans Singh, the scholar and man, will always remain a model for many.

BOOK REVIEWS

33

An Introduction to Indian Religions

*Devinder Kumar Verma**

The book *An Introduction to Indian Religions* by Sardar Harbans Singh and Dr. Lal Mani Joshi is primarily written for a general reader and the students with a view to providing elementary information about Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. But since the authors are eminent scholars in their respective fields, the book has the impress and authority of their erudition. The book attempts a complete survey of the religions of India—their historical developments and their spiritual and moral principles. The authors have tried to keep it free from the technical terms of the religions discussed so that its readability is not disturbed. It is simple and lucid in style and is factual in its approach.

The book consists of the following five chapters:

1. Before History Begins
2. The Hindu Religion
3. The Jain Religion
4. The Buddhist Religion
5. The Sikh Religion

These chapters have been written logically and they grow to their full dimensions in their diligent hands. The plan followed by authors is topical.

In the first chapter *Before History Begins*, the authors have thrown light on the systematic changes from primitive age to the metal age. They have also made a mention of their different gods, and the people's way of living and their religious life. The authors have referred to death ceremonies and practices of men as well as animals. These practices differ from place to place and from time to time. For example,

* Patiala

in the Pre-Vedic period, the dead bodies were generally buried but with the advent of the Aryans the dead bodies began to be cremated.

The second chapter deals with the *Hindu Religion* or Brahmanism. The Hindu Religion is regarded as the oldest religion of India. Unlike other religions, this religion has no founder. The authors have referred to the religious books of the period. Rigveda is perhaps the oldest book in the library of man. Vedic literature is the main source of information regarding the history of ancient India. The doctrine of monotheism was preached through the Vedas. Besides the four Vedas the authors have mentioned *Bhagwat-Geeta, Upnishada* and *Manu Samriti*.

The third chapter deals with Jainism. The Jains regard that their religion is the oldest religion. To support this belief of the Jains a long list of preachers of Jainism has been given and Lord Mahavira has been considered to be the twenty fourth descendant in this line. The main teachings of Jainism have been given in a simple and effective style. The authors have taken special care to see that the import of all the religions dealt by them in the book is communicated to the reader in a simple way. For example, Lord Mahavira is said to have told his followers that through knowledge one knows things, by faith one believes in them, by conduct one gets freedom of Karma and by austerities one attains purity.

In the fourth chapter the authors have discussed Buddhism. According to them Dharma refers to truth or supreme reality. The word Buddha means awakened, enlightened and wise. The roots of Buddhism go back to the tradition called Shramanism which means the attainment of truth. Buddhism is thus closely related to an ideology of pre-Vedic origin. The teachings of Lord Buddha, who is the founder of Buddhism were publicised and widely spread by Ashoka the great, king of ancient India. Ashoka also undertook various measures to spread it in different countries of Asia through the Buddhist monks.

The last chapter deals with Sikhism. It is written lucidly. Life accounts and teachings of the Gurus have been briefly given. This chapter clearly brings out the process of the transformation of Sikhism. The role of the Gurus and the various institutions set up by them for the development of Sikhism has been stream-lined by the learned authors. Sikhism condemns Hindu supersitions such as caste system, Sati and Pardah. Sikhism has most relentlessly attacked idol worship through their institutions like Langar, Manji and Masand. The teachings

of the Gurus were preached not only in our country but other countries also. It organized people to help the weaker sections against the tyranny of the stronger ones. In Sikhism the Guru enjoys a very important position. He is considered to be a ladder by which a person rises to higher places of spirituality. The Guru's position and his role in the society has been elucidated in this book.

No doubt this book is written only to give elementary information to the students and the general readers regarding the different religions of India, the authors have done their work wonderfully well.

The general get up of the book is good.

The Panjab Past and Present
October 1983

34

Approaches to the Study of Religion (ed. by Professor Harbans Singh)

*Cyril G. Williams**

This book is of interest and significance on several accounts. In 1969, on the occasion of the quincentennial of Guru Nanak's birth, the Department of Religious Studies at the Punjabi University, Patiala—perhaps the first department under this name in an Indian University—hosted an international conference on the life and teachings of the founder of the Sikh faith. The Department, hitherto a research complex, had aspirations to launch into teaching, and it was within that context that a seminar was devoted to methodological and curricular procedures in the study of religion. This volume is the happy outcome.

It comprises some twenty-two addresses and papers varying in length and quality, devoted mainly to a consideration of the merits, limitations and validity of various approaches to the study of religion. What adds to its value is that it comes 'live' from the scene of encounter of several religious traditions, but it also has intrinsic merit. Harbans Singh formulates the general tenor of the seminar in his Welcome Address when he declares that the object of the study of religion 'is not to find similarities or a common denominator in various faiths suppressing their peculiarities, but to see the uniqueness of each and grasp its essence by accepting their mutual structural differences'.

While the Indian scene is the one in focus, the discussions are certainly not without relevance in other cultural settings. (L.M. Joshi's remarks in his paper 'Prolegomena on Religious Geography', pp. 125-31, deter me from speaking loosely here of a contrast of Western and Eastern contexts!). As one would expect in a collection of papers by

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representatives of various religious traditions differences in basic presuppositions have to be acknowledged but one would wish that these had been made more articulate. Sometimes even , in some of the best papers, a penchant for immoderate optimism obtrudes in passages of cogent argument, for instance such unconvincing statements as 'All religions put together might give complete truth or the whole truth' (Taran Singh, 'The Traditional and the Transcendental Religion', p. 45) or 'if religion is studied in its proper perspective, I am sure we will be able, in the long run, to evolve a science of religions, more or less as exact as the science of medicine'. (Anwar Ali Khan Soze, 'Studying Religion the Religious Way', p. 49).

An encouraging aspect is the evidence provided of a growing awareness, in different quarters, of the need to engage traditional theology in religious dialogue. G. Gispert-Sauch, speaking from within the Catholic tradition, raises a pressing question for University departments of theology, namely, how far is it possible to continue today a course of theology that implies somewhat a starting point of committed faith (p. 88), while S.A. Akbarabadi describes some of the radical innovations in the Islamic theological curricula at Aligarh Muslim University (pp. 68 ff.).

H.D. Lewis's perceptive extempore observations, which provide a final chapter entitled 'Truth in Religion', merit extended attention. He mentions some of the ways in which elements within the range of normal experiences impinge upon us with accumulative impact and meditate an awareness of the inevitability of the being of God, He leaves us with what is seemingly a tantalising paradox which needs to be faced squarely, namely, that while one cannot suppose that one particular religion or culture is the sole repository of religious truth, it is not out of the question to claim that a finality or completeness may be found in one faith which is lacking in others.

This historic little volume provides guidance in practical pedagogy and much stimulus for further exploration.

Religious Studies
June 1974

35

Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism

*Mrs. Eleanor Nicholls**

In these three lectures, presented to the University of California, Berkeley, during 1982, Professor Singh ably delineates the historical development of Sikhism, paying special attention to the Beginnings (1469-1708), Challenge and Response (1849-1873) and The Creative Half-Decade (1965-1669).

Before reviewing in more detail the points raised by Professor Harbans Singh, I would like to express appreciation for a contribution to Sikh scholarship which recognizes so clearly the world-wide, late twentieth-century context of contemporary Sikhism. With so few resources of Sikh scholarship outside India, I look forward to the establishment of an international centre such as he envisages. It would benefit both Sikh and non-Sikh. Professor Singh fleetingly draws our attention to two of the many recent developments awaiting research in this diaspora Sikh scene - a study of the influx of Sikhs from Africa to Britain and the current dissemination of Sikhism among Americans. Let us hope that these seeds fall upon receptive soil. Comparative studies of Sikh communities in, e.g. Britain, U.S.A. and Singapore are also needed.

The first lecture commences with acknowledgement of those Sikhs who pioneered migration to America and the involvement of many in the Ghadr party. All three lectures ring with 'the urge ... to reaffirm (Sikh) affinity with their religious tradition.' This is certainly true of Sikhs at home and abroad, but it is only one of the responses to the contemporary challenges. Other reactions will also have to be evaluated against a backcloth of secularization, sectarianism and rootlessness which cross all religio-cultural boundaries.

Guru Nanak's, pronouncement of a unity beyond religious

* She is better known as Eleanor Nesbitt, UK.

allegiances was, not a syncretistic continuation of earlier tradition. Guru Nanak taught monotheism and the necessity for total acceptance of God's *hukam,* so loosening the shackles of *haumai*. Right thinking is not enough. Right action is demanded. The concrete manifestations of Guru Nanak's insight were the distinctively Sikh *dhararmsal*, *sangat* and *langar*. Also distinctive of Sikhism from its beginnings is the embodiment of Guruship in ten men, each, apart from Nanak, appointed by his predecessor until Guruship came to rest in the Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh's creation of the Khalsa is duly mentioned, but longer treatment is reserved for his installation of the Scriptures as Guru, in view of the dissent on this point of 'certain cults among Sikhs still owning personal Gurus.'

Evidence adduced includes an exciting new source, discovered by Giani Garja Singh i.e. the Bhatts (hereditary panegyrists, genealogists or family bards). One hopes that the challenge of deciphering will be taken up. Further support is cited from the *rahtinamas* of Bhai Nand Lal, Bhai Prahlad Singh, and from *Gur Bilas Patshahi 10*.

The momentum of the second lecture also builds up to the centrality of Guru Granth Sahib. From now on if anyone asks me about the place of the Scriptures in Sikh religion I shall point the enquirer first to pages 55-61 of these lectures. Here we find outlined the compilation history of the Guru Granth Sahib, its honoured status in worship, its role in daily life as well as the practice of *akhand path*.

The earlier part of the second lecture deals with the challenges confronting Sikhism in the third quarter of the 19th century on the establishment of British rule after Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign. Sikhs had become soft and Sikhism enmeshed in Brahmanical ritual. Numerically Sikhs were declining. Professor Harbans Singh ascribes Sikh revival to the reform movements, although (p. 38) 'external religious symbols of their faith were...more crucial' in reclaiming the Sikhs. Change was effected by the Nirankaris, Namdharis and more broadly - Singh Sabha, combining as it did revival and renewal. In particular by establishing the Khalsa College and Sikh Education Conference, and through dissemination of true Sikhism in newspapers, scholarly works in English, the commitment of thousands was revitalized. Christian mission was a powerful challenge.

Salient constituents of 'the creative half-decade' 1965 to 1969 are acutely drawn in the final lecture, which incidentally illuminates

Sikh history from 1947 to the present. The Green Revolution spelt agricultural success, the creation of a Panjabi–speaking state was a political milestone. The tercentenary of Guru Gobind Singh's birth and quincentenary of Guru Nanak's were magnificent affirmations of identity. Academic institutions for Sikh studies were established including the Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies at Punjabi University, Patiala, Master Tara Singh's career and the Punjabi Suba are clearly presented for the sometimes bemused outsider.

I strongly recommend this book to a wide readership both for the assured handling of major themes and for the invaluable detail, e.g. derivations of words (p. 17 *dharamsala,* p. 18 *sangat*, p. 20 *langar*, p. 29 *khalsa*), humour (e.g. p. 45 directed at Singh Sabha) and a wealth of quotations from original sources.

The Sikh Review
February 1985

36

Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism

*W. Owen Cole**

In the summer of 1982, Professor Harbans Singh was somehow prevailed upon to leave the campus of the Punjabi University, Patiala, where he devotes himself to working on *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, to deliver a series of lectures at Berkeley, California. Not only has that university cause to be congratulated upon its success in persuading the Professor to give the lectures, but credit also needs be given to the Guru Nanak Foundation for having the sagacity to publish them.

By no means all lectures are worthy of publication, even as articles in a journal but these portray a brief, clear and analytical introduction to Sikhism. Such outlines are rare and for that reason alone would be worth cherishing. However, these lectures are the carefully considered appraisal of a Sikh scholar who has devoted his life to the study of his religion and to laying it before others, especially those who are not his co-religionists. Born of experience and maturity this book is far more than the often rehearsed story. It is an examination of major events and influences which have made Sikhism what it now is. Although the title of the third lecture is, "The Creative Half-Decade: 1965-69," it takes the story to 1975 and looks to the future and beyond India though it wisely stops short of the present Khalistan issue, the significance of which no historian can yet assess.

Professor Harbans Singh begins, as a good teacher, at the point where his audience is. He briefly describes the settlement of Sikhs, at the turn of this century, along North America's west coast, refers to their growth and development and then draws attention to the contribution which they made to the struggle for India's independence.

Readers are warned that to be properly understood, the totality of Guru Nanak's tenets and the impact it made on history must be

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appreciated. The Nirguna Sampredaya representing a synthesis of cultic mysticism and Bhakti and Sufism was part of his inheritance but he belonged to none of these systems or orders. He must be understood in his own terms, *sui generis*. Nor should Sikhism be seen as a deliberate mingling of Hindu and Muslim practices.

It is doubtful whether Professor Harbans Singh will be any more successful than other writers in the syncretistic interpretation of Sikhism which still crops up in the writings of the Sikhs themselves, or demolishing, the still to be found western concept, that Guru Nanak was influenced by Kabir but it is heartening to find him making the attempt. It is surprising that when Guru Nanak himself places experience of being taken to God's court and commissioned to bring God to the mind of humankind, so many scholars should have failed to appreciate the seminal influence that this must have had upon his consciousness and thought.

After briefly outlining Guru Nanak's teachings, Professor Harbans Singh then provides us with the Guru's analysis of humanity's predicament and the method by which *mukti* can be achieved. This, of course, combines the life of devotion to God with that of service to one's fellow-beings. This Sikh way of life was once achieved at Kartarpur after Guru Nanak's major *udasis* were over. Naturally considerable attention is given to this community and here the *vars* of Bhai Gurdas are widely used. Sangat, Langar, the equal significance of all the ten Gurus, the creation of the Khalsa, and the installation of the Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru, are explained in sequence before comprehensive first lecture is brought to its end. This is the theme of the second lecture which, in its title spans the period 1849-1873, from the British annexation (and incidentally Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs*) to the origin and development of Singh Sabha Movement. In content the story is taken further and includes a discussion of Sikh historiography and other literary developments. These had an importance which is not always realised in the renaissance of the Panth. Attached to this, also, was the reassertion of the supremacy of the Sikh way of life. It is at this point that compilation, composition, use and significance of the Guru Granth Sahib was also explained in such a way that no one could fail to appreciate its importance for the Sikh community. The implication of the chapter is that the re-emergence of Sikhism was the result of adherence to the Sikh form as preserved in the Guru Granth Sahib. The final analysis is of the developments in

Sikhism since 1947. Much attention is naturally given to political matters and the creation of a Punjabi Speaking State. The learned Professor also discusses the importance of Green Revolution, dating back to 1963 when experiments began with use of new strains of dwarf wheat from Mexico. He recognises, too, how significant the anniversary celebrations, especially of Guru Gobind Singh in 1965, and Guru Nanak in 1969, have been internationally. The second of them, celebrated world-wide as it was, brought Sikhism to the notice of those interested in the study of the Sikhs and their faith.

In closing Professor Harbans Singh again addresses himself to his American audience and expresses the hope that some centre of Sikh Studies might be established there. Hopefully, these lectures have given Professors Juergensmeyer, Pray and Goldman encouragement and advanced the cause a little further. However, perhaps the reviewer might ask Sikh scholars to remember that three lakhs of Sikhs are living in Britain, the largest community outside India: and that its needs and potential, especially intellectually and educationally, are considerable. One would hope that this book might circulate well in the United Kingdom. For Sikh and non-Sikh alike it contains many insights and much learning. As one who himself performs anyone night stands' as a lecturer. I can only admire the professor's lightness of touch and comprehensiveness of achievement.

The Sikh Review
June 1984

37

Bhai Vir Singh

*Kulraj Singh**

The genius and achievement of Bhai Vir Singh, who has been universally hailed as the father of modern Punjabi prose and who has numerous firsts to his credit, do not lend themselves to an easy summing up. His literary out-put was prodigious; its range bafflingly diverse. He wrote novel, poetry, drama, epic, exegesis, biography, juvenile literature, tract and periodical essay with equal facility. And these forms do not exhaust the range of his literary achievement. He annotated and collated some rare and some popular - but all quite voluminous —historical manuscripts and established an undeniable title to being regarded as a historical researcher of high order.

What is more, some of the afore-listed literary forms were introduced in Punjabi letters by him. Bhai Vir Singh's *Sundri* is the first Punjabi novel. His *Rana Surat Singh* is the first Punjabi epic in blank verse with a sophisticated philosophic content. His tractarian writings mark the beginnings of didactic and propagandist literature in Punjabi.

What makes the task of the summing up of Bhai Vir Singh's genius and achievement still more complex is the highly complex nature of the social and intellectual, milieu which provided to his genius its sap and its challenges. Bhai Vir Singh's formative years coincide with an era in the history of the country when new cultural influences were silently undermining tradition and generating a hitherto unknown spirit of freedom. There was an unprecedented upsurge of creative consciousness and new modes of expression were emerging. The contact with western cultural values through English at once provoked a thirst for western learning and a concern for preserving what had been traditionally cherished. This meant cultivation of local English

* Patiala

languages which promised to open up vistas of western learning to the Indian mind. Local languages received keen attention both of the Christian missionary, who regarded them as the only effective instrument of proselytization, and the British administrator, whose objectives were preponderantly secular. Historical factors led to official patronage wholly disproportionate to the demographic realities being bestowed on different Indian languages. And defensive response to Christian proselytization efforts took the added dimension of inter-se disputation among the local religions.

Sikhism had, like all other religions, gathered a thick accretion of formalism and superstition. Its adherents' loyalties to its pristine principles had flagged and the only hope of its survival lay in the duel operation of a complete inner clean-up and a mending of its fences. This could be achieved by the spread among the Sikhs of modern education and dissemination among them of the knowledge of the true principles of Sikhism. The Sikh desire to preserve Sikhism against inner corruption, Christian proselyzation and odium theologicum started against it by non-Sikh critics produced an organisational mechanism which came to be known as the Singh Sabha Movement. Bhai Vir Singh, whose hereditary faculties and the traditional involvement in Sikh affairs of whose family for several generations had inevitably made him share the growing concern about the future of Sikhism, was immediately drawn into the vortex of the movement and became its principal intellectual exponent. "He is the product of the new awareness that was then arising; but he was the genius that gave it substance and direction."

Conditioned as Bhai Vir Singh's personality was by this kind of heredity and milieu, his inspiration was bound to acquire a pronouncedly religious and spiritual orientation. Most of his writing is motivated by an instinct with a social and reformist purpose. But this does not detract from its quality as pure literature. Three of his novels are absorbing narrations of the adventures and sufferings of brave and persecuted Sikhs set in the 'framework of well and meticulously sketched historical eras, in simple, direct and suggestive prose. The fourth is the story of an ideal - though none-the-less true to life, for that - Sikh, laid in contemporary surroundings, struggling to maintain amity among different religious communities with the help of robust commonsense bequeathed to posterity by Guru Nanak.

Rana Surat Singh is, by contrast, an introvert's sally into the regions of spirituality charted by Guru Nanak in the *Japuji*. But its appeal, thanks to the melody of its blank verse, its highly suggestive and graphic diction, the irresistible quality of Bhai Vir Singh's inspiration which issued from his own mystic experience, his deft character portraiture and the universality of its theme, is essentially literary - and universal. The Gurus' biographies constitute a rare fusion of fact and imagination and are the index of a well-though-out view of history : "To know about spiritual beings we have to lean on pious accounts besides the scientific ones, for they alone unfold the heart's secrets".

Poetry was Bhai Vir Singh's permanent concern. But after 1707 when *Rana Surat Singh* was completed, he wrote only short poems which were published in seven successive anthologies. His short poem, instinct with personal intuition and inspiration and responsive to the mystery of life and nature, was an innovation in Punjabi literature. The short poems "express a rare mood of lucid communion" in a highly individual style which none-the-less is popularly interpretable because Bhai Vir Singh managed to relate "his inner experience to the outer world of reality in terms of simple imagery." These poems may be lacking in social significance; but they have "that elemental beauty, that rare creative quality and that universality of appeal which have been the marks of the most genuine utterance of the human spirit."

And what should be the posterity's assessment of Bhai Vir Singh? Some today hold him in religious reverence; others feel that he was too aloof and involved with his private world to have any modern relevance. Posterity, capable of judging him from a fairly long distance of time, would perhaps take a middle view.

A subject so complex and wide in scope it would be difficult to do justice to in a full-scale study spread over hundreds of pages. To compress such a study in a 102-page monograph - 22nd in the series "Makers of Indian Literature", published by the Sahitya Akademi - is indeed a feat, which testifies to the author's unfailing eye for the essentials. And what is more, it, by offering very well-executed translations and summaries of Bhai Vir Singh's writings, provoked an irresistible urge for going to the originals.

The Sikh review
August 1974

38

Bhai Vir Singh

*Sant Singh Sekhon**

This Sahitya Akademi publication in the series, Makers of Indian Literature, is perhaps so for the only one on a Punjabi writer. The choice of Bhai Vir Singh for this purpose is amply justified, for he is virtually the father of modem Punjabi literature, both verse and prose. This small book of exactly a hundred pages gives a succinct and well-connected account of Bhai Vir Singh's achievements.

Professor Harbans Singh has divided his study into eight chapters, the first of which is devoted to Bhai Vir Singh's milieu and general religio-social activity. The last, entitled 'The Man and His Impact,' sums up the author's impression and view of Bhai Vir Singh's personality and total achievement. Of the four central chapters, one is given to his novels, one to his greatest work, *Rana Surat Singh*, one to his shorter poems and one to his learned works. Professor Harbans Singh's acuteness of observation and discipline of expression transcend the limitations of space. Remarking on the way in which Bhai Vir Singh ends the story of his first novel, *Sundari*, Harbans Singh writes: "This answerability to this world and the beyond, this affirmation of existentialist reality and the eternal joy of the spirit, this mutuality of the vertical and horizontal planes sum up the essence of Sikh philosophy. This philosophy is the core of Bhai Vir Singh's *weltanschaung*. His works, in their deeper meaning, are an elaboration of this meaning."

But in his admiration of Bhai Vir Singh, the poet-artist, Harbans Singh does not turn a blind eye to the shortcomings in his work. "But the canvas is essentially too limited," he writes, "to capture in all its nuances the impulse which moved those times. At places the story takes the form of simple historical narration." In the text there are also

* Dakha, Ludhiana

references to contemporary degeneration and weakness. Characterization is incipient and static. Coincidences abound. The moralistic intent is too obvious.

"Yet *Sundari* is a brave, thrilling tale. The plot has suspense and drama. The fortunes fluctuate and the interest of the story is kept alive till the end." That beautifully sums up the qualities of this small novel that have made it the darling of Punjabi reading public to this day and brought its total sales to hundreds of thousands.

About the three novels in this category, Harbans Singh has again very discriminating and illuminating remarks to make. "In spite of the unity of theme and purpose, each of the three' novels had its own individuality. *Bijay Singh* contained an intriguing human situation in the ruling Begum of Lahore, falling in love with the principal character. *Satwant Kaur* evoked the pathos of those helpless times when the country lay at the mercy of invaders from across the border. *Sundari* was conceived with a poetic tenderness which made it the superior of the other two."

About *Rana Surat Singh*, Harbans Singh says with a similar sureness of touch: "To enter the imaginative and poetic world of *Rana Surat Singh* is to encounter the mind and soul of Bhai Vir Singh at their subtlest and most intimate. In this epic of more than twelve thousand lines, his genius and his ultimate concerns are more authentically expressed than anywhere else." Though Bhai Vir Singh's subtlest is perhaps not subtle enough.

Harbans Singh is right in saying that *Rana Surat Singh* marks in several ways the highest point in his long and prolific literary career. Very true, but it has also revealed to a different category of reader and critic, limitations of Bhai Vir Singh's social and political outlook and his incapacity to rise above contemporary interests.

A word about Harbans Singh's English style would not be out of place here. He is an accomplished writer of English prose, who seems to have read his Walter Pater well. In urbaneness and polished expression and in correctness of phrase, Harbans Singh is unbeaten among Indian writers of English prose. But to the regret of many of his friends, owing to lack of ambition, he has not cultivated and exploited this line of achievement.

The Panjab Past and Present
April 1977

39

Bhai Vir Singh

*Saran Singh**

The decline of a people sometimes synchronizes with their indifference to, and neglect of, the language they avow to be their mother tongue. It has become fashion, able in most urban Sikh homes to use a corrupted form of Hindi in their day to day conversation. A sad aspect is that small children, often left to the impersonal care of maid servants, have become strangers to Punjabi. Sadder still is the contradiction inherent in the professedly Sikh Schools, teaching every subject listed under the syllabus except Panjabi!

It seemed comic in 1950's when most Hindus in Punjab driven by the negative Arya Samaj propaganda, decided to disown Punjabi as their language. More recently, however, the comedy has changed into tragedy. As the new generation of Sikhs, especially those outside Punjab are succumbing to a willing acceptance of counter culture and find their own language outlandish - hard to pronounce, harder to put down on paper.

That is the context wherein the life, time and works of Bhai Vir Singh acquire a new urgency as well as relevance. The 112th anniversary of the birth of the illustrious savant (which fell on Dec. 5, 1984) was an appropriate occasion to focus the spot light on latest reprint of Professor Harbans Singh's admirable monograph, originally brought out by the Sahitya Akademi in commemoration of Bhai Vir Singh's centennial. In eight concise chapters, Professor Harbans Singh has encapsulated the whole gamut of the socio-cultural environment in which Bhai Vir Singh grew, the ferment in the literary scene at the turn of the 24th century and the tidal wave that issued forth from his prolific pen. The author gives thumb-nail accounts of Bhai Vir Singh's major works of poetry, prose, fiction and drama, lacing these with a

* Calcutta

critical analysis of his thought and values. The moral and spiritual flavour that pervades Bhai Vir Singh's writings ensures him a permanent place in the galaxy of literary giants of all times. It is this moral readmit, clothed in chaste Panjabi idiom, that we need to prise from his works, like pearls from the oyster. In today's context, its central message ought to be nailed to every Punjabi door in every city and every town, that these values must be cultivated and cherished, if universal verities of truth, love and harmony have to have any meaning and purpose.

Bhai Vir Singh's novel *Sundri*, written some 80 years ago, has never ceased to enthral readers of all ages with the story of chivalry and heroism, devotion and loyalty that characterized a bygone era. Biblical in its intensity, a unique and compelling blend of history and fiction woven around the life of a woman and her evolution from a shy bride to an indomitable unifier of freedom fighters.

But Bhai Vir Singh was a poet as well as a classicist par excellence. To him must go the credit of modernization and diversifying the Panjabi verse. By the close of his distinguished career, spanning over half a century, he had indeed become a national symbol of Panjabi language. His many splendoured genius cannot be fathomed within the space of the slim volume under review but it can doubtless tickle the curiosity, providing a window on the wonderful and multitudinous world of a modern and resurgent Punjab - a window opened by a scholar, critic and interpreter of the eminence of Professor Harbans Singh.

The Sikh Review
January 1985

40

Bhai Vir Singh

*Harkirat Singh**

This is the second edition of this book, the first having been published in 1972.

Bhai Vir Singh was a brilliant and a remarkable product of the Sikh renaissance that was ushered in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in the Punjab and he was an inspiring spirit behind it for over half a century.

He devoted the whole of his life in the dissemination of the knowledge of the Sikh scriptures and of the lives of the Sikh Gurus and the Sikh heroes and martyrs.

This book under review is the work of an eminent scholar as Professor Harbans Singh is. It has been planned under various chapters. The first chapter deals with the milieu of Bhai Vir Singh. The learned author writes that the man who grasped the full implications of the prevailing urges and impulses of the unprecedented upsurge of the creative consciousness was Bhai Vir Singh and in a very real sense, modern Punjabi literature is of his making. Scholars of literature trace to him the origins of Punjabi prose, novel, lyric, epic, drama and historical research. The author traces in this chapter the activities of the anti-Sikh activists particularly the Christian missionaries. In view of the dangers to Sikhism the formation of Singh Sabha and its programme of restoring Sikhism to its old purity, editing and publishing historical and religious books, propagating current knowledge, using Punjabi medium and bringing back apostates into the Sikh fold, deeply influenced Bhai Vir Singh.

Chapter two, deals with the ancestry and formative years of Bhai

* Patiala

Vir Singh. He was born on December 5, 1872 in a deeply religious family with traditions of learning on both the paternal and maternal sides. His family is traced back to Diwan Kaura Mall son of Wallu Mall Chugh. The Diwan was a prominent official of the governor of Lahore about the middle of the 18th century.

Baba Kahan Singh's only son Charan Singh (Bhai Vir Singh's father) learnt Sanskrit, Braj, prosody, Sikh texts and Ayurveda. He learnt English and Persian and western medicine. Poetry was Charan Singh's forte. Vir Singh being the eldest son of Dr Charan Singh's family of six, received special care of and grounding in Sikh literature at the feet of his maternal grand-father Bhai Hazara Singh who was an eminent scholar of Sikh theology. Professor Harbans Singh refers to the good testimonials of Vir Singh's school Principal Rev. McKenzie and a little later an intelligence report branding him as 'disloyal to the core' and a 'zealous neo-Sikh and thoroughly anti-British.'

In chapter three, the learned author discusses Bhai Vir Singh's contribution to 'Punjabi Tractarian Movement' which was the mainstay of the reform movements in various traditions. Tract after tract, began with the line, "Religion is the noblest of all things; nobler still is the preaching of religion." More than ninety per cent, tracts were written by Bhai Vir Singh. Professor Harbans Singh points out the high cultural potential of the tractarian movement. Besides leading to specific conceptual and religious formulations of the reformation, this movement brought maturity to Punjabi prose writing. To promote the same movement Vir Singh launched a weekly newspaper the *Khalsa Samachar*, in 1899 and it has carried on uninterrupted until today.

Chapter four deals with *Sundri* and other novels. *Sundri* was the first novel of the Punjabi language which was published for the first time in 1898. It was written when the Sikh *Panth* needed to be reminded of their glorious past and given a vigorous shake. Within the first thirty five years of its publication Sundari ran into more than a dozen editions and about eighty thousand copies of it were sold away. The book continued to enjoy popularity for decades together not due to any merit of a high order as a novel but due to its historical background that fascinated its readers. It is true that often the plots of Bhai Vir Singh's novels and the names of his characters are imaginary but the background in which his characters play their roles is all historical. Bhai Vir Singh adopts the pattern of *Sundri* in *Satwant Kaur* (Part I,

published in 1900 and Part II in 1927) and *Bijay Singh*, Professor Harbans Singh, after giving brief summaries of the novels, has made a critical analysis of the working of Bhai Vir Singh's mind, who, while writing his novels, does not aim at producing a good novel as it would appear to an ordinary reader. He wants to present a study of the Sikh character in a particular situation. Sardar Harbans Singh writes that 'Bhai Vir Singh has drawn the character of Sundari with deep faith, tenderness and insight. To make a women the hero of the novel was a sign of the delicacy of his poetic perception.'

Bhai Vir Singh's fourth novel *Baba Naudh Singh* was published in 1921. Commenting on it Professor Harbans Singh writes that it has admittedly a didactic bias as Baba Naudh Singh's life is one long sermon on Sikh morality and religion which its author carried off with genuiness of his personal charm and conviction. In this novel the author's prose style is at its maturest. The novelist had moulded for himself a style adequate to his purposes of philosophical speculation and religious and social exposition. Punjabi idiom was refined in this process. Bhai Vir Singh was the creator of Punjabi prose just as he was the creator of Punjabi novel. Bhai Vir Singh, like the eminent English novelist Sir Walter Scot, gave a lead in writing historical novels in Punjabi but due to the Punjabi writer's incapacity to master the subject of his at the same time and fix up his plot in historical background no progress could he made in this direction.

Chapter five, relates to *Rana Surat Singh*. In the words of Professor Harbans Singh 'this poem is unique in Punjabi literature not only for its form and size but also for its artistic decor. Its figures are fresh. Its music is enthralling. The architectural sweep of its structure has an elevating quality.' In this epic of more than twelve thousand lines, Bhai Vir Singh's genius is expressed wonderfully. The poem is a tale of yearning of Rani Raj Kaur for her merger with her husband Rana Surat Singh who died young. According to Professor Harbans Singh, for the sheer force of its poetry *Rana Surat Singh* is incomparable. The poet has used this epic poem as a text for the elucidation of Sikh mysticism. The narrative is breath-takingly gripping. It has a hypnotic tone and is rich in illustration. Bhai Vir Singh's *Raja Lakhdata Singh* was the first play written in Punjabi language.

In chapter six, the author discusses short poems of Bhai Vir Singh for whom poetry was a permanent calling. Professor Harbans Singh has analysed those poems in a very scholarly manner. He has rendered many of the small poems into English, reaching very close to the personal import of their author. Bhai Vir Singh's deeply cultivated intellect and instinct for form kept his emotion in control and moulded it into well defined and easily recognizable patterns, as the learned writer of this book puts it.

In chapter seven, the author has discussed the learned works of Bhai Vir Singh. For his scholarly scrutiny and treatment were chosen *Sikhan di Bhagat Mal*, a work by Bhai Mani Singh (1644-1734), Rattan Singh's celebrated *Prachin Panth Prakash*, and the *Janamsakhi*. The same chapter contains a brief summary of each one of the *Sau* (hundred) *Sakhis* (anecdotes) given in the book. One may question the advisability of such summary when the complete text is at hand; still it serves a purpose - it provides information about the contents of each Sakhi.

The main body of the book containing the text of the *Sau Sakhi* is annotated through footnotes which give information of text in different manuscripts. Appendix I contains connotations and explanation of words and phrases of the text. This is a very useful glossary. The old texts are sometimes difficult to comprehend because of the archaic form of vocabulary and idiom. The editor has taken pains to explain every item considered difficult by him. In this process he is, at places too liberal to be economical.

Appendix 2 is entitled *Itihasik Vishleshan*, literally, historical analysis. It contains informatory notes on personalities, places, events, institutions, etc., occurring in the text. These notes contain valuable information. The editor being a historian by profession, is at his best in this appendix. He has consulted vast corpus of source material for preparing these notes. In most cases he has mentioned the source of information contained in a particular notes.

In appendix 3 are given four of the *sakhis* which are narrated in the earlier printed version of the *Sau Sakhi* but are not found in old manuscripts. These sakhis confirm the existence of interpolated material and also provide specimens and nature of interpolations.

Bibliography consists of long lists of works consulted by the editor. It is divided in three parts - list of Punjabi manuscripts, list of

published works in Gurmukhi script and list of English books. Interestingly the titles of English works are also given in Gurmukhi script.

The author has made this work fully comprehensive. He has handled the material with the objectivity of a historian and craftsmanship of an editor, and has produced a work which will indeed be admired by those who want to have reliable information about the *Sau Sakhi*.

The Panjab Past and Present
April 1985

41

Bhai Vir Singh: Poet of the Sikhs

*J.L. Das**

Bhai Vir Singh's literary output was as bewildering as his personality and scholarship. He was a poet, essayist, dramatist fiction writer, biographer, author of scholestic writings on the theology and what not. He can truly be called the father of modern Punjabi literature. Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib and Professor Harbans Singh, both of the Punjabi University, Patiala have rendered a distinct service to the cause of literature as a whole by presenting an English version of considerable selection from his lyrics and reflective poems, along with connected extracts from his *magnum opus* in poetry the spiritual epic entitled *Rana Surat Singh.* "The anthology consists of Bhai Vir Singh, together with a brief sketch of his career, by Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib Part II comprises extracts from the master's epic poem, *Rana Surat Singh*, translated and introduced by Professor Harbans Singh. Mr. Yamn Lovelock has collaborated with both the professors in their laudable exercises.

As one goes through the treatise one cannot but be amazed at the graceful case with which Bhai Vir Singh traversed in the realm of poetry. He was equally at home in dealing with themes of love and romance, flora and fauna and other objects of nature, courage and sacrifice, and devotion and piety. Most of his poems reveal his passionate love of things beautiful and sublime, compassion for the poor and the under privileged, and contempt for cant, hypocrisy and variety. The quintessence of his philosophy is submission to a noble cause. "To yield is truly to live: This is the path of growth and bliss and happiness." (*The Rose's Story*). Bhai Vir Singh's "*The Immortal Light*: Homage to Mahatma Gandhi on his martyrdom" reminds us of another remarkable obgiac poem. "O captain! My captain" by Walt

* Calcutta

Whitman with which it can stand comparison.

Rana Surat Singh, in its original is an epic of more than 14,000 lines. It is the saga of a young widow, Rani Raj Kaur, her longing to rejoin her husband Rana Surat Singh, who was killed in battle and her passing through the *Gian Khand* (Realm of knowledge), *Saram Khand* (Realm of Aesthetic Beauty) and the *Karam Khand* (Realm of Grace). Ultimately she felt herself united to her lord and reached the state of grace and equanimity through *Nam* (the divine Name or word). Allegorically it is the story of the eternal quest of the human soul for its Divine source to merge itself in it. The epic is remarkable for its thematic sublimity, spiritual grandeur and vast spectrum.

Translation from the original into a different language is always an uphill task. Particularly in case of poetry it is very difficult to retain the spontaneity, mellifluous cadence and nuance of the original. But it can be said without any reservation that in this particular assignment the translators have emerged with flying colours. The volume is priced at Rs. 30.00, rather on the high side. I wonder whether the publisher could not bring out a cheaper paperback edition to suit the pocket of the reader with moderate means.

The Sikh Review
August 1977

42

Bhai Vir Singh: Poet of the Sikhs

Ajit Singh

English renderings of a representative selection from Dr. Bhai Vir Singh's vast poetical works are presented in this volume by two eminent Sikh scholars, Gurbachan Singh Talib and Harbans Singh, of the Punjabi University, Patiala. This work among others was published under the UNESCO's auspices on the occasion of the great poet's birth centenary celebrations in 1972.

A father figure of the Sikh renaissance and modern Punjabi literature, Bhai Vir Singh's creative writing spanned a period of more than fifty years. The corpus of his combined literary works run into some fifty volumes. His creative genius encompassed a variety of literary genres: from lyrical poetry, epic, fiction and drama to learned exegetical commentaries on the Sikh scriptures. Unswervingly dedicated with a missionary zeal, he made copious contribution to the development of Punjabi literature and the interpretation and understanding of Sikh history and theology. Indeed, his was a versatile genius whose impact will continue to be felt for generations. Particularly those who falter in faith will find in him a beacon of kindly light to lead them back to the fold.

Bhai Vir Singh's poetry includes lyrics, poems of reflective nature and the spiritual epic, *Rana Surat Singh* which is his *magnum opus*. The translators have made selections from these works of his. The book is divided Into two parts with introductions to each. Part I presents a collection of sixty-six poems while part II contains extracts from the epic, *Rana Surat Singh*.

Translating or transcreating is an uphill task and more so when a translator is concerned with a poetic work of high creative imagination, for each literary text is unique and projects its own set of problems. Besides, the ability to transcreate the 'poetic feeling' of the original

work in an alien language whose idioms and expressions differ from one's own requires 3 great deal of imagination and resourcefulness.

The translations in the book under review make good sense and this is what is of primary importance. They have a felicity of expression, are aesthetically pleasing and rhythmic. The subtle beauties, nuances and shades of thoughts have been well transcreated. The English versions of Bhai Vir Singh's two most popular lyrics will serve as examples:

First, The Tremulous Head (*Kambdi kalai*)
You came to me at last in a dream;
Gasping, I struggled, trying to enclose
you in my arms,
Ah, but your effulgent self slipped
gliding from my grasp,
Leaving my arms the poorer,
stretched out and trembling.
Compare it with an earlier popular version:
In a dream you came to see me
I leapt to bold you is my embrace
It was but fantasy, I could not hold
And my arms ached with longing.

The second example is from The Momentary Flash (*Achancheti da jhalka*):

As your manifestation flashed on my eyes
The sliver fell from my hand,
The hum of the spinning-wheel ceased;
My eyes fell into a daze as they saw you
descend on earth.,
My vision trembled as my being melted
into yours
Drowned in a flood ecstasy,
Lost, absorbed!

Rana Surat Singh is an allegorical epic of more than fourteen thousand lines. It is considered Bhai Vir Singh's Immortal work and marks the watershed of his poetic art. As a work of sustained excellence with heightened effect, it has perhaps no parallel in modern Punjabi literature. In this, a reader meets with the poet's mind and soul in its full pathos and joys. The epic provides an odyssey into the mystical

domain of super-consciousness where beauty, sensitivity, poignant yearning and ecstasy intermingle. Only extracts have been translated. To quote an excerpt from *The Ascent*:

Each moment I grew purer, more refined,
Lighter than a petal, lighter than the breeze
Flying unaided, I shone like a gem.
Now one vast shimmering filled all the air,
More beautiful to see than lightning's blaze;
It softly soothed and did not irk the eye,
The breeze was the gentlest, silk as the sky
Constant in pace like a string plucked to music;
Its comforting touch poured serenity's balm,
Mounting higher still in this celestial light
I saw a myriad of spirits swim
Across the sky.

The whole translation is highly commendable and captures the substance and flavour of the original. It is hoped that it will have a wide appeal for the scholars and lay readers alike and will open the way for a fuller version of this spiritual epic and other poems.

The Sikh Review
May 1980

43

Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh

*Dr. Hira Lall Chopra**

To honour Dr. Ganda Singh, the doyen of Punjab historians, on the completion of 75 fruitful years of his age, his friends and admirers have befittingly chosen to present him with a volume of essays dealing with the various spheres of the life-long research activities of the learned doctor. The Editors, in their 'Introduction' deal with the details of the life of Dr. Ganda Singh and his marvellous achievements in Punjab's historical researches. There are about 33 essays starting from Chandra Gupta Maurya to the Khaksar movement emanating from the Punjab, adding glory to this ancient land of the five rivers. Topography of the Punjab; the Siddha Tradition before Guru Nanak; Medieval Punjab; the Trade and Investment in 15th and 17th centuries; Jats of Punjab; Persian writings on Guru Nanak; Contemporary account of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev; Aurangzeb and the Sikh Gurus; Ala Singh, the founder of Patiala; Sikh Misls; Prem Sumarag; British Policy towards the Sikhs; Bengali elite in post-annexation Punjab; Origin of Singh Sabha; Growth of Railway System in the Punjab; Sikhs in California; Ghadar Sources; Punjabis in U.S.A.; Punjabi Soldier in World War I; Hindustan Socialist Republican Army; Communalism; Factionalism and Nationalism in pre-Independence Punjab; Syncretism and Formation of the Sikh Tradition; Nabha Incident; Ahmadiya and the Khaksar Movements are some of the topics discussed by scholars who wield authority in their respective subjects which provide a refreshing study and are veritable authentic records of Punjab, her culture and history. In the end, the Editors have given an exhaustive list of the literary and historical articles written by Dr. Ganda Singh from time to time. What a

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stupendous task Dr. Ganda Singh has achieved leaves the reader in a wonderment! May he live long to continue this sacred venture is the prayer on the lips of every reader. The Editors deserve to be congratulated for setting up a new tradition and showing to the people as to how a scholar should be honoured.

The Sikh Review
June 1977

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Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh

*Balwant Singh Grewal**

Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh is a collection of scholarly works by established and well-known authors on the History of Panjab/ Sikh Studies throughout the world. These are a tribute to Dr. Ganda Singh as honest historian and an unbiased seeker of historical facts. His own published works. which include 30 books in English; 27 books in Punjabi; 8 books in Urdu and Persian; and about 48 papers, exclusively relate to this field.

These essays differ in theme but the reader is led to see the unity of perspective. This collection reflects the variety and quality of research that is being done - in Panjab Study Circles in numerous Universities which are as far apart as New Zealand, India and USA.

The whole book is research based and highly documented with notes and references. Many of the popular beliefs and myths surrounding the historical development of the Panjab, the role of the Sikhs and the place of Sikhism are convincingly exploded by exposing them to scientific enquiry. Thus the reader is able to get a much clear picture of Punjab and the Punjabis who were the dominant actors in the development of the historical events during the 19th century. This would be, in my view, a treasured addition to the personal collection of inquisitive readers and invaluable for public libraries.

The Sikh Courier
Spring 1979

* London

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Guru Gobind Singh

*Gurbachan Singh Talib**

One of the hardest things in India is to make a realistic, factual statement on the life and work of a great religious personality. The mind tends, under the impact of immemorial tradition, to cast the life-events of such a personage into the mythological mould, and otherwise to overlay it with rhetorical idealization, so that beneath these obscuring effects the figure of the 'Man' as such is hardly visible. All his doings are exhibited to be motivated by super-human impulses, and his ends to be shaped by never-failing divine intervention. So strongly established and ubiquitous is this process, that even personalities belonging to comparatively recent and historical times have not escaped such treatment - be they the Gurus of the Sikh faith or even holy men of the order of Sri Rama Krishna Swami Vivekanand and Sri Aurobindo. The Indian mind tends to see behind their lives the mythological pattern, and to recreate the prophet at the cost of the Man.

What Sardar Harbans Singh has attempted - and he has done it with remarkable success - is to present Guru Gobind Singh as a Man - divinely inspired and appointed no doubt - but guiding his life, through trials and tribulations to the noble consummation of martyrdom, with superhuman rectitude, transcendental wisdom and unshakable fortitude. He has treated, in the spirit of Carlyle, the very course of such a life as the supreme miracle - the miracle of living above the ordinary human motives, weaknesses and temptations - to keep ever before it the Word and its compelling force of duty. And the life of Guru Gobind Singh lends itself, as few even among those of

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founder of faiths, to such treatment. The growing upon him even from childhood of the sense of the mission of liberating the earth of evil and tyranny; the spirit of dedication where through be felt ever the unfailing presence of the Lord (given by him numerous evocative names, such as Akal, the Eternal; Asipan, Wielder of the Divine Sword - and such others); the vision of a resurgent, emancipated humanity, freed from the cramping shackles of tradition, the faith which bore unflinching the deepest human tragedies - all these qualities are indeed the guiding light which mankind needs to see its way through the bewildering maze of the various forms which evil in our times has taken. Rather than narrate miracles, the author herein has attempted to bring out the supreme miracle of a life whose various facets are Divine Teacher, Compassionate Father, Emancipator and Crusader. And more than anything else, the Guide who created amidst the darkness of the medieval ages in India those values which the modern world is finding axiomatic for any progressive and enlightened society - equality, brotherhood, humanitarianism and elimination of sectarian rancour. This book is meant obviously for the benefit of the average thoughtful reader, giving a consistent narrative but eschewing the more recondite philosophical discussion, such as would be in place in a specialist treatment of a thesis. It is nevertheless historically authentic, and has presented the underlying ideas in a digested form which itself has been the work of painstaking scholarship. The author has accepted, in keeping with the spirit of his work, the current view of the various episodes and events: to enter into a re-examination of some of these would be contrary to his aim and could fit in more with the approach of the specialist and research scholar.

As in the earlier work of this author, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, the style of the narrative herein also is characterized by easy grace and charm which, wonderfully blends the idiom of thought and intellectual analysis. The account slides with this inherent charm from episode to episode, in the best spirit of biography. I suppose the art of biography, requires on the writer's part more than anything else, restraint - restraint in the face of the temptation to disgression and discursiveness. This elegant balance has been maintained.

The rendering of some of the Guru's compositions and of certain

key-words in Sikh thought is meticulous and sensitive, and is itself a valuable contribution to literature on the subject.

With all its valuable features, this book should supersede the existing accounts of Guru Gobind Singh's life - barring of course such work of massive scholarship as for example, Macauliffe's. The printing and paper are 'super-superb' and but for the fact that the book has been subsidized for propagation of knowledge, the price could have been much higher.

The Sikh Courier
Spring 1968

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Guru Gobind Singh

Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the Sikh Gurus, is chiefly remembered as the man who transformed the Sikh community into a militia capable of withstanding the might of an openly aggressive Moghul Emperor. He led the Sikhs during the period when it was the official government policy "t o destroy with a willing hand the schools and temples of the infidels, (non-Muslims) and to put an entire stop to their religious practices and teachings." Harbans Singh shows how the Sikhs under Gobind Singh's inspired leadership resisted all armed attempts to destroy them, and he chronicles in great detail the battles and campaigns which eventually won for them a begrudging measure of tolerance from the Islamic rulers. There is an excessively pious account of his childhood and training, but there is little or no mention of his spiritual or religious dimensions. Even his poetry is martial as its main theme is the righteousness of the Sikh's cause and the necessity of upholding it by force. Gobind Singh created the Khalsa, the elite force of Sikh community, he inscribed the five emblems by which the Sikhs are commonly identified today and he terminated the Sikh Guru's line by passing his authority to the Sikh scriptures. All these events are retold in detail, but from a spiritual point of view, there is little in this book to indicate that Gobind Singh was anything more than a great soldier and a charismatic leader of men.

The Mountain Path
October 1980

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Guru Gobind Singh— S. Harbans Singh (Translated from English into Bengali by Professor Upendra Kumar Das)

*Sunil Kumar Das**

In the *Gita*, Shri Krishna says to Arjuna: "Whenever there is transgression of virtues, O Bharata, I take my birth again and again; for the protection of the pious and destruction of the sinners, in order to restore virtue, I descend on earth from age to age." In the same spirit, Guru Gobind says in his *Bachitra Natak*: "Listen, ye, all saints, it is for the ratification of justice, and supporting the cause of the worthy and the virtuous; as well as, for vanquishing and demolishing the miscreants, that I have come down to earth". In fact, Guru Gobind's was a life completely dedicated to the cause of righteousness and justice, and selfless service to humanity. For this noble cause, he fought throughout his life against the Mughal tyranny, and sacrificed his own life and his four sons, without the least hesitation. The battles undertaken by him were not offensive. He believed in *dharam-yudh*, that is, fighting for the right cause of justice. Although a great warrior, Guru Gobind Singh had a deeply devout soul, and with all his might he stood against all sorts of dogmatism and religious superstitions. Not only as a social reformer, but also as a philosopher and prolific writer, his contribution has been immense and of lasting value. His love for the truth and justice, his strong sense of discipline and morality, his indomitable courage and spirit of sacrifice, and his great organising capability, have few parallels in history. In the present-day world-situation, when there is dire need of straightforwardness, courage and discipline, righteousness, justice and morality; love, service and sacrifice; a study of the biography of Guru Gebind Singh is highly

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advisable for our younger generation.

S. Harbans Singh has rendered yeoman's service by writing an authentic biography of Guru Gobind Singh, which because of its objective approach and literary style of presentation, is sure to become popular to the readers. Furthermore, the Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Chandigarh, have done something very noble by paying their homage to the great national hero through the publication of the book on the sacred occasion of his third birth-centenary celebration in 1967, as well as through its translation into other regional languages at a considerably small price. The Bengali version of the book, the present volume, is lucid in style, language, and idiomatic expression, that any reader is likely to take it as an original work in Bengali. Professor Upendra Kumar Das of Visva Bharati University, the able translator of the book, deserves the thanks of the Bengalees for his valuable contribution in translating the English version into Bengali. I would wish a wide circulation and popularity of the hook throughout all educational institutions and public libraries.

The Sikh Review
August 1970

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Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith

*Ganda Singh**

Of all the publications on the life of Guru Nanak that have come out in the Quincentary year, Professor Harbans Singh's book under review is easily the best biographical study of the Great Master.

The book is divided in fifteen chapters with an appendix on the inscription at Baghdad, a glossary of non-English words, a bibliography and an index.

The first two chapters, Introductory and Historical Milieu, are devoted to a survey of the source material on Guru Nanak's life, particularly the *Janamsakhis*, and the historical background of his times.

The *Janamsakhis*, it is true, are not a very authentic source of information on the life of Guru Nanak from an objective historian's point of view. But it must also be conceded that they are the only available early sources on which a researcher in the subject has primarily to depend.

Objective historiography was a thing unknown to mediaeval Hindus of the fifteenth century when Guru Nanak was born. The recording of day-to-day events of a transitory life, which to them was *mithiya* and *maya*, unreal and illusory, had no meaning for them. The art of writing factual history and chronicles itself is Semitic in its origin and it came to Indian writers through Muslim scholars during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Guru Nanak was a contemporary of Babur, the diarist, but none of the Guru's companions and close associates has left to us any autobiographical memoir, diary or chronicle which could serve as a basis for an historical account of his life.

However, a student of history comes across similar situations in

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the case of almost all religious prophets and leaders whose followers had not unoften drawn their pictures in colours which reflected more the imagination of their own minds than the real image of their object, or they had presented these great men as they had come to them evolved through centuries of their unquestioning devotees' faith.

In spite of this all, Professor Harbans Singh has very judiciously used the *Janamsakhi* material and other traditional accounts, along with a large number of secondary sources in different languages, and, doing his best to steer clear of the whirlpool of accretions that had made them confusing and incredible, he. has presented a clear story of Guru Nanak's life which may safely be said to be the nearest approach to historical accuracy.

There are still, no doubt, a few problems connected with the Guru's life defying solution. Let us hope that in time to come they will as well be solved by the learned author.

The Panjab Past and Present
October 1970

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Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith

*Spencer Lavan**

As a contribution to the 500th anniversary celebration of the birth of Guru Nanak, Harbans Singh has written a new biographical study of the founder of the Sikh faith. The author, now Chairman of the new Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies at Punjabi University, Patiala, undertook most of the writing and research while at Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religions, 1968-1969. This fact is significant for any appraisal of this book on Guru Nanak as compared with many studies of the Guru and of the Sikhs which have been published in the last century. It is significant because the important issue raised by Harbans Singh's study is the methodology it uses to approach what most historians would find to be elusive material. The fact that much of the work was done at Harvard and in consultation with Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith indicates that Harbans Singh has taken seriously Smith's theories about the relation of faith and cumulative tradition in the study of man's religiousness, and has applied these in his own work.

Harbans Singh's book stands in sharp contrast to W.H. McLeod's *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* published by Oxford in 1968. In this latter work, the sharp tools of the orientalists carved surely and precisely through the various *Janamsakhis* (biographies of the Guru) leaving the reader (on p. 146) with a three paragraph summary of what could positively be proven about the life of Guru Nanak. Recognizing the shortcomings of the *Janamsakhi* materials, Harbans Singh, nevertheless, attempts, as he says, "to join fact and meaning," (p. 21) in his new biography.

Does a book which describes the life and impact of an important medieval Indian religious figure, but which uses myth and legend as

* Tufts University, USA.

part of the picture it draws, have any place in bibliography for Asian Studies? Is there any justification for reviewing such a book in this journal which is dominated by the work of hard-headed historians, economists and anthropologists? As a historian of religions, this reviewer believes that both the discipline and the method used by Harbans Singh's study are legitimate and should have a place.

Harbans Singh does not claim to have written the definitive biography of the Guru. He depends largely on the *Janamsakhis* for his reconstruction and recognizes the defects of certain of the cycles and the variety of meanings that may be attributed to the varying sources available. The recognition of the deficiencies, the overlay of myth and legend in the sources does not then prevent the author from writing eleven chapters on the early life, travels and teachings of the Guru. What a sharp contrast to Professor Mcleod three paragraphs! The important point about what Harbans Singh has done is this: more significant than trying to reconstruct a straight factual history about Guru Nanak is taking into account the impact that the Guru has had in the lives of men, particularly those who lived within a century after his death.

Biographical history has too often been written to show the causes which shaped the life and thought of a man. It has seldom been written in light of the effect that the same man has had on others. The same problems that we find in the sources about Guru Nanak have always existed in the sources we have for Jesus, Siddharta Gautama, and Muhammad. The Gospels, the *Pali* Canon and the *Sira* of the Prophet were all written by men of faith who wanted to say something about religiously dynamic person whose life and teachings had Profoundly effected their lives.

We cannot conclude this review without stressing that the non-Sikh reader may be put off by the author's viewpoint which is clearly one of a man, writing within his own faith and tradition. The Western historian of India may want to keep asking why Harbans Singh does not call into question certain miraculous and mystical happenings in the life of the Guru. The reader who may be disturbed by the apparently facile acceptance of the material of faith should then offset his reading by referring back to McLeod. Anyone wishing to make a thorough. study of the Sikhs will have to use both studies referred to here plus the copious materials from Trumpp to Khushwant Singh listed in the bibliographies of both recent books. For an undergraduate course on

medieval or Mughal India, Harbans Singh's new volume is a welcome addition for this historian of religions. We hope that others in the South Asian field will come to appreciate the perspective this book has to offer.

The Journal of Asian Studies
May 1972

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Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith

*G.S. Talib**

This work on the Life, Times and Teachings of Guru Nanak is by the Head of the Department of Religious Studies at Punjabi University, Patiala, who has already two valuable works concerning the Sikh faith to his credit, and is besides editing a journal of extraordinary good quality devoted to the discussion and exposition of problems concerning Religion. This brief mention of the credentials of the writer is necessary to convey to the reader the distinguished place occupied by the writer in the field which is the subject of the work under review.

While in a book of such extraordinary quality it would not be adequate to mention a catalogue of its contents, still these might be of help in forming an idea of its range and scope. In the Introduction is a highly competent discussion of the available sources on the Life of Guru Nanak, particularly the *Janamsakhis* and other sources in Punjabi of which a comparative study is here made, which despite its brevity, is telling as to the historical reliability and authenticity of each. In the next chapter on the milieu in the medieval ages in India, in whose span is included the period of the Guru's Divine Ministry and the development of the Sikh faith a comprehensive field of reference is brought in from the writers on history, religion and culture to fill in the picture of these centuries, which is so vital for an understanding of the particular form and emphases which the Guru imparted to his teachings. to this chapter, Bhakti and its Islamic parallel development of Sufism in India is discussed with a keen eye to their essential features in throwing up new religio-ethical thought. In the chapters which follow, the 'teaching' is conveyed in the context of the sequence of the events of the 'life'. Sensitive renderings from *gurbani* are brought in to buttress the statements about the 'teaching'. Controversial issues

* Patiala

like the Guru's visit to Ceylon and Baghdad are further discussed in exhaustive footnotes and the latter in addition, in a Appendix.

The style and expression have a finis and felicity which should make this book pre-eminent among the studies on Guru Nanak for the world of learning, though it is for that reason not remote or forbidding!

The Sikh Review
August 1972

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Guru Tegh Bahadur

*Kuldip Singh Dhir**

Sikhism symbolizes a high degree of reconciliation between the temporal and the spiritual. The basic tenets of this religion were enunciated by the first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak. These were explained steadily and systematically by the nine Gurus that followed him. A number of scholars have tried to discover for the modern mind the charisma which envelops the lives of the Revealers of the Sikh faith. This has resulted in several studies of their lives and times which, for the most part, focus on the theological significance, but seldom both. Any such biography has necessarily to be interpretative to suggest the profound import of Sikhism, along with its being precise so far as factual information is concerned. Again the biographer must work out a sound basis of identification between traditional and modern models of inquiry, for only this can afford a helpful line of insight needed today. Professor Harbans Singh's credentials from these viewpoints are well established. His biographies of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh have won him laurels for their characteristic combination of mind and heart, of devotion and intellectual discipline, of piety and perception. These have been translated into several national and international languages.

Guru Tegh Bahadur is the third book of the author in his series on the Sikh Gurus, written in the same inimitable style, it is marked by economy and elegance. The author has woven the life of the Guru into the texture of the times, tracing with sensitive touches the evolution of Sikh society. This has resulted in a biography which offers not only a profile of Guru Tegh Bahadur's life and times, but also a perceptive inquiry into the understanding of Sikh religious experience.

Acquainting the readers of his perspective in the preface to the

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book, the author tells us that his narrative is impinged upon by interpretation. For him the real value of a religious biography lies in clear comprehension of the significance of both the life and the ideology of the prophet. The author also makes us familiar with the manner and the extent to which he has used old Punjabi manuscripts. He is aware of the fact that these are all poetical works and not liner history. Yet he has not lost any opportunity to make use of the kernels of factual information in them, keeping intact the flavour and spirit behind these manuscripts. While these sources have been employed in recreating a warm-blooded personality of the Guru, His *bani* preserved in the Sikh Scripture and his *hukamnamas* have been used to give an insight into his mind. The learned author has exercised caution in using *Bhatt Vahis* as historical sources, steering clear of the contradictions in them which can easily mislead to dangerous extremes if used indiscriminately.

The actual biography starts with a brief resume of the religious inheritance bequeathed to the Ninth Master by the eight Gurus who preceded him. We get here a step-by-step description' of the evolution of the Sikh community as it crystallized over a period of two centuries. The author maintains that all the Gurus in the prophetic line of succession were of same spiritual rank and shared the same revelation. No change in tenets laid down by the first Master is witnessed. Each Guru unveils one facet or other of one complete whole, nurturing the growing Sikh community, giving it the necessary direction and strengthening its base.

The next chapter relates to birth and early life of the Guru. It starts with the birth of the Guru in 1621 and ends with the passing away of the sixth Guru in 1644. In both these chapters, the narrative is sprinkled with bits of valuable interpretative references which pinpoint the uniqueness of the Sikh faith in its most unalloyed form.

The third chapter recaptures for us long years of contemplation spent by the Guru at Baba Bakala. The biographer asserts that this period was not spent like a recluse. The Guru kept in touch with his worldly responsibilities and carried on silently his mission for the spread of Sikh teachings.

The dramatic events which led to the anointment of Tegh Bahadur as Guru form the subject of the next chapter. It also gives a glimpse of the extensive journeys of the Guru through the Majha, Malwa and Banger districts of the Punjab. The narrative in this chapter takes us to

the founding of Chakk Nanaki or Anandpur Sahib by the Guru.

Chapter V describes in detail the Guru's travels to the far eastern part of the country to proclaim the word of Guru Nanak and meet the Sikhs scattered in far-flung places. Wherever the Guru went, he created a new zeal for moral and energetic living. The author has also described the detention of the Guru by Aurangzeb in November 1665 and his subsequent release in the next month. Again he has traced precisely the itinerary of the Guru, describing the places where he halted. According to him, the Guru halted at Delhi, Mathura, Agra, Etawah, Kanpur, Fatehpur, Banaras, Sasaram, Patna, Monghyr, Bhagalpur, Sahibganj, Dhaka, Dhubri and Hajo. He concludes that Hajo is the farthest place to which the Guru went during his travels to the East. The chapter ends with the return of the Guru to Anandpur Sahib before the Baisakhi festival of 1671.

The above is followed by an analysis of the fast changing political situation of the country and the forces or issues behind the Delhi Emperor's bigotry, which was making the state increasingly oppressive. In the gloom that was gathering, the Guru toured the Punjab, soothing the people's groaning souls and spreading new awakening among them. The tour left the country in ferment, the author points out.

The next chapter concentrates on the unique martyrdom of the Guru to secure for the people a just and human treatment, to defend the universal values of truth, equality and tolerance. The description of the circumstances under which the supreme sacrifice took place is marked by exactness and has been authenticated by suitable documentary evidence.

The consequences of the martyrdom of the Guru have been examined in the chapter that follows. The author stresses here the voluntariness which underlay the Guru's decision to offer his life. for a noble cause. The martyrdom initiated a process which changed the course of events in northern India. It broke the stupor of an indolent society and resuscitated its spirit, stirring a new sense of fearlessness and an urge to break the shackles of slavery.

The vision and teachings of the Ninth Master have received separate treatment in the chapter that follows. The author reminds us that the *bani* of Guru Tegh Bahadur essentializes the same spiritual experience and insights as does the *bani* of the preceding Gurus. The Guru's perspective comes out as life-affirming, not life-denying.

Instead of lamenting on the fate of man, he gives a call to man to transcend his given state and attain higher levels of consciousness and insight.

The last chapter contains in the author's own rendering, a few of Guru Tegh Bahadur's *sabdas* and *salokas*. A chronology of all the important events in the life of the Guru and a detailed index appended to the biography make it a useful and handy reference work on the life and teachings of the Guru.

Thus this biography gives a meaningful, precise and incisive description of the prophet-martyr whose life and message have simultaneously a wide universal appeal. Without any blemish of style or narration, the biography can well rank as a work of art as well as of reference. It will also prove immensely valuable to those wishing to acquaint themselves reliabley with Sikh thought and tradition.

The Sikh Review
March 1983

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Guru Tegh Bahadur

*Nirbhai Singh**

The book, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, by Harbans Singh is a reprint of the first edition published in 1982. The author maintains uniformity of style of narration as in the above book. The book covers entire life span of the Ninth Guru who made supreme sacrifice for the cause of "human dignity and freedom". He martyred himself on the altar of truth for mankind. His martyrdom was turning point in the Indian history. His hymns incorporated in the Sikh Canon reveal eternal truth.

In this book, the author has made use of all important relevant old Punjabi sources. These are mostly poetical works, yet the author dexterously culls out kernels of historical facts and articulates them in a coherent book-form. Primary sources of Guru Tegh Bahadur's philosophy are his *bani* preserved in the Sikh Scripture and his *hukamnamas* or letters written to *sangats* in different parts of the country.

Another distinct merit of this work is that it makes use of a new source of *Bhatt Vahis* which were made available to the Punjabi University by late Giani Garja Singh. These *Bhatt Vahis* shed light on life-events of Guru Tegh Bahadur with minute details of places and dates. If the information contained in the *Bhatt Vahis* is collated with Persian and old Gurmukhi chronicles, they can be an excellent source of Sikh history and lives of the Gurus. The author has drawn upon all these sources. I have every reason to believe that this book will provide a pleasant and profitable reading.

The Sikh Review
February 1995

* Patiala

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Maharaja Ranjit Singh

*Kuldip Singh Dhir**

If the notion of history as the biography of great men can be sustained at all, it might perhaps be best applied to the Punjab in the first half of nineteenth century. During this period Ranjit Singh stood as an all-powerful figure in this part of the land. The account of his career may furnish to the more discerning investigator a set of recorded facts, the ramifications of which extend as much into the nature of Sikh enterprise as they do into the political structure, sociology and history of nineteenth century India. His name continues to be pronounced with a sense of rare fondness even today. His genius had many facets, yet his typical traits were derived from his rural Punjabi ethos. This imparts to his profile genuineness - a granite-like quality which keeps shining forth through the layers of history. It is therefore hardly necessary to justify the conception of a new biography on the Maharaja from the pen of an author who has been contributing to the wealth of Sikh literature through concentrated efforts and penetrating insights for more than two decades.

The author, Professor Harbans Singh has, in this biography, attempted a reconstruction of Maharaja's career with a far greater degree of precision and perspective than anybody else, making this slender monograph a work of careful scholarship and balanced judgment. There is no dearth of the source material and documentation dealing with the subject. In fact the very magnitude of the vast literature on the Maharaja seems to have provoked the author to attempt this small but standard biography.

The success of the author lies in creating a really convincing and revealing picture or the king after careful analysis of conflicting pieces of evidence. Facts pure and simple don't matter for him. The *piece de*

* Patiala

resistance of the biography is the interpretation of these facts in the Sikh framework. This inter relation makes sense and is presented in easily accessible prose. The resulting biography is thus extremely readable and has that easiness of style and quiet flow which comes out of freedom from *cliches* and jargon that disfigure many other contemporary biographies. In fact the author has the necessary insight and power to deal with the men behind the events. He covers almost every aspect from his psyche and personality to the meaning of his political and military activities, while charting the contours of his life.

The general plan of the book is clear and well built. The author has divided it into fifteen chapters. He starts with the tracing of the family background and childhood of the Maharaja in the first chapter. We see him as a small but brave and determined boy, accompanying his father on expeditions first and then managing his lands and soldiers with skill and energy. As Ranjit Singh grew up he gained more and more lands. The second chapter describes the success that followed his arms everywhere making him finally master of the royal capital. This marked the end of years of disorder and foreign rule. A period or peace and plenty began with it. The third chapter portrays the harbinger of this new era striking coins in the name of Guru Nanak. Very soon the Maharaja emerged as a shrewd diplomat and a powerful king to whom others looked for shelter and help in settling their disputes. The fourth chapter starts with Maratha chief Jaswant Rao Holkar coming to the Punjab in search of shelter. We see Ranjit Singh settling disputes between Holkar and East India Company and between chiefs of Nabha and Patiala states. Similarly, he resolves the differences between Raja Sahib Singh and Rani Asa Kaur of Patiala and extends help to the Raja of Kangra against the Gurkhas. He annexes Kasur, Pathankot, Jasrota and Chamba in quick succession, widening his sphere of influence in a way that alarms the British. The fifth chapter analyses the circumstances that lead to the historic treaty between him and the English.

The focus in the sixth chapter is on the Kashmir expedition and the fall of Attock. The seventh chapter outlines the historic victory of Multan and extension of his influence far deep into the western frontiers, stemming the tide of invaders coming in an unceasing stream, looting and plundering the Punjab. This was reversal of a tradition which started with Raja Anang Pal's defeat at the hands of Mahmud of Ghazni in the beginning of the eleventh century. Ranjit Singh rolled

back the wave forever and carried the battle into the very homes of the invaders. We see him liberating the valley of Kashmir in the eighth chapter. He took keen interest in the progress of this state after its liberation. This is followed by expeditions to Dera Ghazi Khan and Hazara. He was now easily the most remarkable ruler in the East. Such was the magnificence of his court that travellers and visitors came fo Punjab from all parts of the world to satisfy their curiosity about him. Many skilled Europeans took pride in serving under him. The ninth chapter concentrates on some of these foreigners in his court. The tenth chapter narrates encounters of the Maharaja with the rulers of Kabul. He inflicted crushing defeats on Azim Khan and Dost Muhammad Khan frustrating all their designs to regain their lost influence in the frontier region of Punjab. Time and again *jehads* were raised against the Sikhs. Each time these were crushed. The most serious among these was the one led by Syed Ahmed.

Ranjit Singh was now at the height of his power. The eleventh chapter of this biography gives us a glimpse of rulers of distant lands seeking his friendship. The Nizam of Hyderabad sent him costly presents. The kings of Herat and Baluchistan sent emissaries to call on him. King William IV of England sent him a friendly letter and presents. Again, a friendly meeting was held between him and Lord William Bentinck, the then English Governor-General of India. In the twelfth chapter we see the Maharaja annexing Peshawar in the West and Ladakh in the North. When Dost Muhammad Khan learnt about the fall of Peshawar, he was seized with a passion for revenge. He swept down the Khyber Pass with a large host. His armies were routed decisively at Jamrud, though the Maharaja had to pay heavily for it in the form of loss of the brave Sikh general, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa.

Ranjit Singh's reign is famous not only for splendid victories in battle and glowing acts of generosity and heroism but also for colourful events. Professor Harbans Singh has drawn our attention to this aspect of the king in the thirteenth chapter or the book. His description revolves around the pomp and éclat that marked the marriage ceremonies of his grandson, Nau Nihal Singh. The fourteenth chapter dwells on his alliance with the British to replace Shah Shuja on the throne of Kabul. It is followed by a description of the joint expedition to Kabul to install the Shah. The author finishes this account with the death of the Maharaja who by his energy and wisdom had created out of chaos a strong and well-administered State and who had conferred

upon the people gifts of unity, peace and freedom.

Thus the biography essentially follows the chronological order of narrating events right from birth to death, each chapter enlightening us about some important facet of the Maharaja through the medium of major events in his life. In fact, the author has a sure eye both for man and the events concerning or making the man, that is why he can narrate the events in such a manner that the inner man gets connected with the external event, and when the reader collects the man along with it.

The book contains an index, but not a bibliography. One would have liked to see it at the end inspite of the fact that the author does not agree in entirety with interpretation of facts as outlined in any of chronicles available. Taken as a whole the book enhances our understanding of a significant period in the history of Punjab as also of the man who shaped it more than anybody else. This biography is thus a stimulating and substantial contribution towards comprehending the real Ranjit Singh.

The Sikh Review
May 1981

54

Mahindi and Other Short Stories

*Kuldip Singh Dhir**

India is a country of great regional and cultural differences. No meaningful awareness of the country's literary activity and output is possible without intercommunication through the media of translation. Punjabi has often been ignored in this respect. Albeit Punjabi short story has established its vitality and verve, the outside world does not know much about it due to the lack of communication. Sardar Harbans Singh, who has a penchant for literary excellence, has done well to produce this anthology of Punjabi short stories in English translation.

Even a cursory glance at the stories like Virk's *The Blades of the Grass* and *The Bull Beneath the Earth*, Sekhon's *Pemi's Children*, Amrita's *Kanjak*, Dhir's *The Common Wall* and Joshi's *Mahindi* makes us feel that this slender anthology makes available the classics in Punjabi short story to the English knowing people.

Sardar Harbans Singh responds simultaneously to the humane and the tender, the poignant and the delicate. His selection is thus expressive of his continuing engagement with the refined and the subtle. All the recognized writers of the older generation are here. There is little doubt that the Punjabi short story is slipping out of the hands of these masters and by its inner dynamics passing on to the younger writers. None of the younger writers has been represented here. In fact the new fledged writers can be represented in chiaroscuro only in a separate volume. As it is, the entries present a panoramic view of the Punjabi short fiction introducing us in the main with the masters of this art, yet giving a fair idea of its tenor and major concerns.

What impresses me most about this work, is the quality of its

* Patiala

translation. This is really delectable and has the aroma and verisimilitude of the original. In fact it retains the quick of Punjabi life. It leaves a lingering fragrance of the Punjabi life and lore, its hearths and homes, shops and streets, flowers and foliage. The translator seems to have a peerless command over both the Punjabi and the English language which enables him to do his job so well.

The stories in this collection are but small casements opening on a long vista of Punjabi fiction, which the connoisseurs of literature will definitely love to enjoy in full and if possible even in their original. The assemblage acquaints the readers with the representative stories of Kartar Singh Duggal, Kulwant Singh virk, Amrita Preetam, Sant Singh Sekhon, Surinder Singh Narula, Santokh Singh Dhir, Nanak Singh, Mohan Singh, Gurmukh Singh Musafir, Gurbux Singh, Ajit Cour, Mohinder Singh Joshi and Navtej Singh.

Books of this kind are for understanding the dialectics of Punjabi literature. I am sure that this anthology will bring the Punjabi short story nearer to the hearts of the people who are not familiar with Punjabi.

The Sikh Review
October 1985

55

Perspectives on Guru Nanak

It is a collection of papers presented and discussed by scholars from all over the world at the International Seminar on the Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak which was held on the campus of Punjabi University, Patiala, on September 3 through 5, 1969 in connection with the quincentenary of the Guru's birthday. Of more than 60 scholars, 15 were from universities outside India. All of them are masters in their own fields and bereft of narrow or sectarian outlook. Thus, we have a dispassionate study of the various currents and cross-currents which have been lashing the world since the glorious days of the Buddha, Jesus Christ, Prophet Mohammed and Sufis down to the Guru's advent on the world stage.

The literature on Guru Nanak's life and philosophy is enormous but we doubt if the kind of scholarly and scientific treatment on the scale contained in this book has ever been attempted by any university in India. The principal topics discussed include the Guru's philosophy and mysticism, theology and doctrine, language and poetry, ethics and social ideas, besides his message and impact in the context of main world religions. Such an all-inclusive survey gives us an idea of his peerless genius. A saint and savant, divine singer who sang the song of the Word and the song of the Cosmos, thinker, mystic and family man, and revolutionary, he was indeed the embodiment of all that was great and noble in life. Like Paul the tent-maker, Bunyan the tinker, Tersteegen the ribbon-maker and Kabir the weaver, the Guru knew how to combine vision and industry. This disproved the Western notion that Indian mystics are life-negating and world-negating recluses. He proved that we are creatures of sense and spirit and must, therefore, lead an amphibious life. He rejected the severely monistic doctrine which discarded the world as an illusion.

The mysterious union-in-separateness of God and the soul is a

necessary doctrine of all sane mysticism. It deals with the individual, not as he stands in relation to the civilisation of his times but as he stands in relation to truths that are timeless. The scholars, whose papers are included in the volume, have discussed mysticism in the conviction that although mystical experience is essentially ineffable, it is possible to talk about it in the intelligible universe of discourse. They contend that mysticism is the expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order, whatever be the theological formula under which that order is understood.

The way these scholars have spoken of Guru Nanak, with the wide perspective of their scholarship, the stern integrity of their thoughts, the analytic clearness of their disciplined mind, and the devout awe of their heart, reassures us that here are witnesses whom we can trust because they have taken nothing for granted and speak out of the fullness of personal exploration and experience. They have found in the Guru a saint of the East, no amateur of a thing and rarefied spirituality but that rare creation - a whole man. They believe that mysticism is a continuous tradition in man's spiritual history, that a modern mystic can speak in accents of the great mystics of the past, and that a mystic of the East can resemble a mystic of the West in spiritual temper. They confirm Rudolph Otto's conviction that there is a spiritual kinship of the human soul, which transcends race and climate and environment. These papers prove that the Buddha, Christ, Nanak, Kabir, Jalaluddin Rumi and others were fellow-citizens of the same realm of the spirit, all held together in a mighty embrace. These saints preached that the springs of the truest prayer and the deepest poetry - twin expressions of man's outward going passion for the Eternity which is his home - rise very near together in the heart.

This is not a volume to be read straight through from beginning to end. Rather it is a book in which the reader can dip at various points as his interest inclines, each paper standing on its own as a masterly exposition of the subject discussed.

One thing is puzzling. The seminar was held in 1969. Why did the editor take full six years to compile the papers together, when these were ready in cut-and-dried form, and bring them before the public now in 1975? Their timeliness for the general public has, thus, been eroded a bit, though they have an eternal value for those interested in Sikhism and other religions.

The understanding of this praiseworthy collection would have been easier, if the editor had used, in the general text, modern romanised spellings of vernacular words. For instance, consciousness or mind is better read as "chit" these days than "cit". Also the spellings are not uniform; religion has been described as "madhab" at some places and as "mazhab" at others. And so on. But these minor faults do not affect the tremendous value of the volume.

The Spokesman Weekly
Guru Gobind Singh Number
1976

56

Sri Guru Granth Sahib: Guru Eternal for the Sikhs

*Saran Singh**

The root dilemma of humanity through the ages has been the search and identification of the true teacher or prophet, who could guide us out of the quagmire of sin and superstition into the realm of self realisation and joy, The Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib represents the most comprehensive, coherent and compelling enunciation of the creation's moral and spiritual purpose. In so far as the message of Guru Granth is set to ineffable symphonic measure, its appeal is to the faith residing in the heart more than to the intellect. The Sikh scripture is, quintessentially, 'poetry of pure devotion, lyrical rather than philosophical, moral rather than cerebral,' as succinctly note by the author of this vigorously written treatise, a reprint of which has been made available recently.

Professor Harbans Singh is acknowledged among the most outstanding scholars of the Sikh lore. An artist with the use of language, he is singularly attuned to the spirit of the Sikh scripture. In this monograph, however, he discusses the background in which the Adi Granth was compiled and eventually ordained as the manifest and eternal Guru of all Sikhs primarily from the standpoint of historical authenticity, giving a wide berth to the philosophical or metaphysical implications of the message. In an age wherein man is unable to cast off the thraldom of flesh and blood Bhagwans and Gurus, the author traces and analyzes the crucial events and pronouncements leading to the ascension of the Tenth Guru and installation of the Granth as the Guru Eternal. Consequently the mass of practising Sikhs believe that in the perilous times ahead, the only constant and true guide is the Holy Word embodied in Guru Granth Sahib, not only as the repository

* Calcutta

of element truths but as the source of hope, joy and promise for all humanity. For so long as the Guru Granth is read, reflected upon and actualized in day-to-day life, Sikhism will remain a vital force in the world. In one sense, therefore, this monograph could be called primer of faith.

The Sikh Review
July 1988

57

The Encyclopadia of Sikhism

*Khushwant Singh**

I have often bemoaned the absence of Indian Encyclopaedias. Every advanced country has them and they are periodically revised and brought up to date: Britanica, Americana, Italiana? Since independence all we have done is to reprint works of this genre compiled by our erstwhile rulers. This is something that State Governments, Universities or private foundations should give some thought to. It needs a team of editors, researchers and a lot of money; no individual can be expected to undertake their compilation on his own.

A start has been made by the Punjabi University at Patiala to produce *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*. Harbans Singh, who has been a Fellow at Harvard, Lecturer at Berkeley, McGill and many other well-known universities is its Editor-in-Chief. He is the right man for the job. How many professors are there who turn down offers of Vice-Chancellorship? Harbans Singh refused one offered to him on a platter. he preferred to go on teaching and compiling material for his Encyclopaedia. It is to have over 4,000 entries dealing with every aspect of the community: its history, politics, literature, art, culture. I do not know where he will find 4,000 contributors who have the discipline required to write factual, accurate and unbiased pieces in the exact number of words prescribed. I have contributed to some encyclopaedias including the Britannica and know it is very poorly paid. All you get apart from a few measly dollars is your initials at the end of the article. When in company you have to manoeuvre and dialogue round to encyclopaedias and discretely drop the information that you are one of the intellectual aristocracy invited to write for them.

The Sikh review
March 1986

* Renowned Journalist, Delhi

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The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism

*I.J. Singh**

Prior to this work edited by Harbans Singh the only comprehensive encyclopedia of Sikhs and Sikhism was the *Mahan Kosh* in Punjabi by Bhai Kahan Singh (Nabha), first published in 1930 with a foreword by Principal Teja Singh, another major Sikh scholar of the day. The *Mahan Kosh* apparently grew out of dialogues with Macauliffe and other scholars and took 15 years to compile. A single volume of over 1200 pages, it has had no new entries after the changes and notes left by the author in 1938 before his death, although it has been periodically reissued by the Language Department, Government of Punjab. With the *Mahan Kosh* cntaining over 70,000 entries, Bhai Kahan Singh set the standard and, although comparisons are odious, every new work of this genre will invite comparison.

The present work, under review here, has been a long time in the making. The project of a comprehensive *Encyclopedia of Sikhism* in the English language was initiated by Punjabi University in 1966. Now after a very long and arduous gestation, the first volume of this monumental work has been born. It covers only the letters A to D of the alphabet.

Until now no such exhaustive work existed in the English language. Clearly one was needed. The world, including the Sikhs, has undergone a sea change since the early twentieth century. A large number of Sikhs no longer live in Punjab. More importantly, a very visible and conspicuous minority of Sikhs lives outside India. Also, political developments in India have focused much attention on the Sikhs during the past decade. Because of the worldwide Sikh diaspora and their increasing contacts with the non-Sikh world in this global village, Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike needed an authoritative reference

* New York University

work on Sikhs and Sikhism.

The strengths of the current work are many and obvious. It is in English. Now if a person conversant in English needs to know the history or gist of the *Asa di Var* or *Barah Maha* for example, he has a source to consult. It presents facets of our history and religion which have come to light only in the past half a century. For instance, Baldev Singh, the first Defence Minister of free India is discussed at length. Writings of Bhai Vir Singh earn a place as they should. In 1930-38 there were four *Takhts*, now there are five; perhaps a future volume will address the issue. The entry on the *Akal Takht*, includes a terse report of its destruction in 1984 by the Indian Army followed by the bungled attempts of the Indian Government to reconstruct it. The Anandpur Sahib Resolution, which to many Sikhs is akin to the Magna Carta of their rights and aspirations, gets a detailed description but not analysis. It is not mentioned that this document was labeled "secessionist" by Indian Prime Ministers Indira, and later Rajiv Gandhi, for several years, and that Rajiv Gandhi finally did an "about face" and referred it to the Sarkaria commission for the reorganization of the States.

In some matters, the new Encyclopedia is truer to recently learned historical detail than Bhai Kahan Singh's, yet it omits significant features. For example, Kahan Singh wrote of Banda Bahadur escaping from Mughal captivity and spending his later years in relative peace when he married and had a son. The present encyclopedia follows the now well established facts of Banda being tortured and killed in captivity following his son's murder at the hands of Mughal captors. But during Banda's ascendancy North India saw not only the first Sikh coins (this is mentioned) but, more significantly, also the first land reform, which is not discussed. The period of the Gurus is well presented. The administrative style of Ranjit Singh is competently discussed as are the Anglo-Sikh Wars and the subsequent Treaty.

The commonly used Gregorian (Christian) calendar is used in describing historical events which is of great utility. Each entry provides a few useful references; I wish the listing had been more selective if not exhaustive. There are many more biographies as compared to the work by Kahan Singh - and they are richer.

This volume runs from Sir James Abbott (the first entry) who was the British Resident's Assistant in Lahore during the first Anglo-Sikh War of 1845-46 to Dyal Singh Majithia (last entry), the 19th

century Sikh philanthropist, remembered as the founder of the *Dyal Singh College* and Library as well as Punjab's premier newspaper The Tribune.

This Work, unlike the one by Kahan Singh, does not define each word or concept and its use in the lexicon of the Guru Granth. It becomes therefore, a very useful companion to the Mahan Kosh, but not a substitute for it. Compared to the work by Kahan Singh, it has very few direct quotations from *gurbani* and they are in English. There are no photographs; Kahan Singh had many and they were helpful. A discussion of Sikh art and architecture is lacking: perhaps a forthcoming volume would address that topic.

This Encyclopedia represents the contributions of many and a seven-man Editorial Board. Many of the 132 listed contributors are well known scholars (among others, G.S. Talib, Piar Singh, Rattan Singh Jaggi, Piara Singh Padam). There are also a number of non-Sikh scholars of Sikhism (McLeod, Loehlin, McMullen, Barrier, L.M. Joshi, Mulk Raj Anand, to name only a few). Some of the authors may be considered controversial by many such as Khushwant Singh and Hew McLeod and that is good, for differing voices make for a richer dialogue and should be heard. But Zail Singh is also listed as a writer, and he is no expert on Sikh theology or history. He might have something to say on Sikh politics but can he be objective? Anyhow, I could not locate his work in this volume. I wish there was an index listing each author and his or her specific page, or subject, so that one could easily follow up on a given issue or writer. That is the way many well known encyclopedias are organized.

Compiling an encyclopedia is, at best, tedious work and more so when the Chief Editor is in chronic ill health, as in this case. The work therefore, is all the more laudable. The writing is succinct and precise and the Editors have been able to achieve the impossible - that is to minimize the vagaries of style which are almost always found in a multi-author work and are most jarring to the reader. The varied writing styles have been flawlessly merged and smoothened. With attractive format and large type, the book is very readably organized. It has 850 entries. Three more volumes are projected to cover the remainder of the alphabet (E to Z). One hopes the subsequent siblings of this volume will have an easier and timely arrival.

Harbans Singh and his cadre of editors have rendered a seminal service to Sikhism and to the cause of interfaith dialogue as Sikhism

moves into the twenty-first century with its unique message, taking its place alongside the other great religions of the world. One cannot help notice that only 2100 copies were printed. This does not speak well for Sikhs as lovers of books - though they follow a religion of the Book.

In summary. this book is a reference work of immense interest and value to scholars as well as to those who are just curious. Certainly Sikhs and their institutions (Gurdwaras) should have it, but so should the College and University libraries if they have any investment or program in comparative and Eastern religions.

The Sikh Review
April 1994

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The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism (Vol. I)

*Darshan Singh Maini**

Each literary genre has its own unique genesis and genius, and it answers significantly only to those imaginations which are constitutively so structured as to be in tune with its character. And each genre imposes its own inner aesthetic on the engaged imagination, creating a field of connotations and a hum of resonances. To put it differently, it brings to a focus the energies of its form and the energies of the operative mind. It's thus that a symbiosis is achieved, and a grid of insights and values is established. To be sure, this kind of consummation is there to be seen in such pure genres as music and poetry, but a little thought will show that even mixed genres also develop on similar lines, and establish their own identity, clan and ambience.

What shall we say, then, of the all-inclusive, portmanteau and voluminous genre of an Encyclopaedia which traverses so many territories and cuts across so many disciplines as to become a kind of grandee in the Comity of letters? It's in some such way that I view The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, a massive and ornate cathedral of collateral texts prepared by scores of scribes and specialists under the watchful and benign eyes of Professor Harbans Singh, "the complete" Sikh scholar. There is an air of erudition and sadhna about this corporate and magnificent enterprise, reminiscent of the Gothic architecture with its vast and intricate design. The opulent and elegant looks of the Volume in question seem thus to authenticate the visionary encyclopaedist's view of things, and this meshes well with his world-view which, I may add, is a sum of Sikh perceptions, doctrines and observances, a sensibility steeped in Sikhism, and saturated with the precept of sewa or service couldn't but imbibe the milk of moral labour.

* Patiala

To encyclopaedize all that knowledge is to fire all the engines of the imagination. And it's imagination of discrimination, collation and fusion. A comprehensive and holistic perspective alone can keep an encyclopaedia on a proper course.

Meanwhile, a couple of points need to be noticed. Since an encyclopaedia is a compendium of varied interests and styles, the question of evolving a common pattern of writing assumes a seminal importance. Ideally, the style in such a genre ought to be functional, neutral and lucid - a kind of 'White prose', to use Susan Santog's expressive phrase. It then rests upon the Chief Editor to hone down the varying modes of expression to a rounded, smooth and 'standard' style. It appears to me, Professor Harbans Singh has tried valiantly to achieve such a condition. It's not an easy thing to do.

The Sikh Review
August 1994

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The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism (Vol. II)

*I.J. Singh**

The world, including that of the Sikhs, has undergone a sea change since the early twentieth century. Less than a hundred years ago the world appeared a bewildering and large place with a mixture of cultures and religions which seemed beyond understanding, or even the need for it. It is still baffling and complex, but reduced to a global village where the increasing interdependence of different peoples requires that they understand each other and their differences.

Though one of the five largest religions in the world, Sikhism is only now beginning to be known outside India. Perceptions about Sikhs and Sikhism, particularly in the West, indeed even in India, are mired in ignorance. Political events in India have saddled Sikhs with undeserved negative publicity. Because of the increased interest in the Sikhs, resulting from their heightened visibility, coupled with a worldwide Sikh 'diaspora', Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike needed an authoritative reference work on Sikhs and Sikhism, in English.

At least five encyclopedic books on Sikhism exist in English, by Cole and Sambhi, Sangha, Shackle, Kohli and by McLeod. But they are brief and not as inclusive. The present work, under review here, has been a long time in the making. The project of a comprehensive Encyclopedia of Sikhism in English language was initiated by Punjabi University in 1966. After a long and arduous gestation, the first volume, covering the letters A to D of the alphabet, appeared in 1992, this second volume takes us from E to L.

As I noted in my review (1994) of the first volume, (The Sikh Review, April 1994) prior to this, the only comprehensive encyclopedia of Sikhs and Sikhism was the *Mahan Kosh* by Bhai Kahn Singh (Nabha), first published in 1930. It took 15 years to compile and

* New York University

contained over 30,000 entries in a single volume of over 1200 pages. With the *Mahan Kosh*, Bhai Kahn Singh set the standard. It has been periodically reissued by the Language Department, Government of Punjab, but had no new entries after the author's death in 1938. It is in Punjabi; therefore, not accessible to those without facility in Punjabi language.

The strengths of the current work are obvious: it is in English, it is comprehensive, it is an cumuli. Now, if a person conversant with English needs to know the history, or gist of the *Gujri ki Var*, for example, he/she has a source of reference. It presents facets of our history and religion which have come to light only in the past half a century. For instance, *Jaillianwala Bagh Massacre* is well covered. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale gets a straight forward, factual, terse, non-emotional sketch. But unmentioned in his biography is the generally circulated notion that, early in his political ascendance he was allied with the ruling Congress party. Writings of Bhai Jodh Singh and Bhai Kahn Singh (Nabha) earn a place as they should. Sardar Kapur Singh rates an important note, though his contributions to the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, which in many ways defines the political aspirations, of the Sikhs, remain unexplored. There is no explanation of where, when and under what circumstances was the reverential honorific: "Bhai Sahib" bestowed upon Kapur Singh.

W. Owen Cole contributes a detailed and informative exposition of the meaning of Guru, and Murray Leaf discusses the concern of Granthi. McLeod presents a lengthy and useful discussion on *Hukam*. Himadri Banerjee has several entries on Bengali writings on Guru Gobind Singh. The many available *Gupranalis* are ably presented.

An incredible, if amusing, step-back into time, was the controversy over the electrification of the Golden Temple, when many Sikh luminaries argued that only ghee lamps were acceptable. In keeping with the obsequious Indian society electricity was to be installed to mark the commemoration or 60 years of Queen Victoria's rule!

The many and varied Khalsa Diwans get adequate coverage. But the entry on the one in Malaya (founded 1903) fails to tell us of any activities since 1927. Is it still alive and well? Similar question arises about the Khalsa Diwan Society, Vancouver (founded 1909). Are. there any current activities? There are individual entries on Sikhs who were prominent outside India. like (Kartar Singh Sarabha, but there is no

systematic discussion of the Sikh 'diaspora'. Sikh laborers had a hand in the construction of the Panama Canal and Kenya's Railroad, and have almost a hundred-year history in North America and East Africa. Their presence deserves scholarly exploration at some length.

The commonly used Gregorian (Christian) Calendar is used in describing historical events which is of great utility. Each entry provides a few useful references; I wish the listing had been more selective, if not exhaustive. There are many more biographies as compared to the work by Kahn Singh, and they are richer.

This volume runs from 'Sir Herbel Benjamin Edwardes' (the first entry), a British officer who served as Commissioner of Peshawar, NWFP, and Ambala, to Ludhiana Political Agency, (last entry), the forerunner of the North-West Frontier Agency Maharani Jind Kaur, the widow of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, rates a fair, detailed and sympathetic entry.

The scope of entries is wide-ranging. Thumbnail sketches of most persons - Sikhs and non-Sikhs - and events that impacted on Sikh religion and history - are provided. The inquisitive reader will find enough to satisfy and interest. This work, unlike the one by Kahn Singh, does not define each word or concept and its use in the lexicon of the. Guru Granth. It becomes, therefore, a very useful companion to the *Mahan Kosh* but not a complete substitute for it. Compared to the work by Kahn Singh, it has very few direct quotations from *gurbani* and they are in English. There are no photographs; Kahn Singh had many and they were helpful as well as graphic.

This Encyclopedia represents the efforts of many and a seven-man Editorial Board. It lists 224 contributors but the individual essay of each is not easily found. it is not clear if all 224 have contributed to this volume, or does the list include the contributors to all four volumes. On the list are well known Sikh scholars (among other, G.S. Talib, Piar Singh, Rattan Singh Jaggi, Piara Singh Padam) as well as non-Sikh scholars of Sikhism (McLeod, Loehlin, McMullen, Juergensmeyer, L.M. Joshi, Mulk Raj Anand, to name only a few). Some may be controversial, such as Khushwant Singh and Hew McLeod, but that is good; differing voices make for a richer dialogue and should be heard. The late Giani Zail Singh is also listed as a writer. I wonder what was his expertise, certainly not in Sikh theology or history. Perhaps Sikh politics was his bailiwick, but how credible could he be? Anyhow, I could not locate any of his work. Helpful would

have been an Index listing each author and his or her specific page or subject so that one could easily follow up on a given issue or writer. That is how many well known encyclopedias are organized.

Compiling an encyclopedia is, at best, tedious. This work is indeed laudable. The writing is succinct and precise and the Editors have been able to achieve the impossible - to minimize the vagaries of style which are inevitable in a multi-author work and are most jarring to the reader. The varied writing styles have been flawlessly merged and polished. It is very readably organized, with an attractive format and large type. Two additional volumes now remain in order to cover the rest of the alphabet (M to Z). One hopes the subsequent siblings of this volume will have an easier and timely birth.

Harbans Singh and his cadre of editors have rendered a momentous service to Sikhism and to the cause of interfaith colloquy as Sikhism moves into the twenty-first century with its unique message, taking its place alongside the other great religions of the world. Once again, I noticed that only 2100 copies were printed. This does not speak well for Sikhs as lovers of books though they follow and revere a 'book' - The Guru Granth Sahib.

In summary, this book is a reference work of immense interest and value. Certainly Sikhs and their institutions (Gurdwaras) should have it, and so should scholars, as well as Schools, College and University libraries if they have any investment, or program, in Comparative and Eastern religions.

The Sikh Review,
April 1997

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The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism (Vol. I–III)

*Kuldip Singh Dhir**

It is indeed a formidable undertaking to prepare an Encycyclopaedia pertaining to a discipline in which not many exegetical lexicons exist and even the basics are yet to be determined. Such a gigantic work involves not only the interpretation of tenets and events but also collection and collation of data from diverse sources, known and unknown. It becomes all the more difficult when it comes to the interpretation of theological doctrines and concepts. The scholar has the stupendous task of convincing the use of his competence, erudition, mastery over the subject and objectivity of vision. Sikh studies got an impetus when in 1966 the late Kirpal Singh Narang, the then Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University, Patiala, in his considered wisdom chose a scholar of Sardar Harbans Singh's stature to accomplish the task of editing the first ever *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, which he has done marvelously.

At seventy-seven today and in not very good health Sardar Harbans Singh must be very happy and content to see his labour of thirty years bear fruit. His *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* is now a pride publication of Punjabi University. Its three volumes are already out and the fourth and final is in press. These three volumes have already been issued in 1992, 1996 and 1997 respectively. The first volume contains entries from A to D, the second from E to L and the third from M to R. These three volumes are spread over 1,700 printed pages in full size and contain about 3,000 entries on various facets of Sikh faith and philosophy, history and tradition, culture and life style, customs and rituals, letters and literatures, art and architecture, ethics

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and morals, locals and shrines - in fact all that one may like to know about Sikhs and Sikhism.

Even a cursory perusal of these volumes makes one feel that the editor has authentic knowledge of the subject and has delved deep in all the currents and undercurrents of the Sikh faith. He has the knack of perceiving and projecting the intricacies and has singularly succeeded in adapting to his needs the advanced encyclopaedic culture prevalent in the west. His sober and ripe mind has given the much needed balance to issues, events and personalities which could in certain cases become controversial and inflammable in the hands of a lesser genius. No political, denominational, personal or material interests have been able to lead him astray. He has done the job with an unswerving loyalty to the cause and unmatched sincerity. As a result the encyclopaedia has become such a great gift to religious scholarship of India which the editor and his very competent team can really be proud of. In this connection Messrs Harmindar Singh Kohli, Sardar Singh Bhatia, Dharam Singh, Gurnek Singh, Gurmukh Singh (Major) and Gurcharan Singh (Giani) deserve special mention, Entries in the encyclopaedia have been contributed by a galaxy of scholars in diverse fields.

There is a general belief that the Sikh faith though imbued with most modern and scientific spirit has hardly ever been projected as such by its followers. Nor have the Sikhs cared to record their marvelous history, although throughout their existence, they achieved unprecedented glories. Sardar Harbans Singh has ventured them both by defining all the major doctrines of Sikh philosophy and important events of Sikh history. He is locating and emphasizing the points of similarity and departure while defining various concepts of Sikh thought *vis-a-vis* religious traditions. He is engaged in the task of explaining the Sikh doctrines in its pure unalloyed form while simultaneously maintaining a dialogue with the latest approaches to philosophy, religion, ethics, culture and history in the present post modernist age. Diversity, plurality, individuality and difference in discourses which relate to different cultural patterns have been duly taken note of him.

The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism is a work of high literary merit. Sardar Harbans Singh's style is direct, terse, lucid and tight. His aim

throughout has been intelligibility and comprehensiveness. The details and facts are authentic and reliable. Being equipped with analytical acumen immaculate erudition and an extensive knowledge of the English language and its idiom, the editor has succeeded in making his *magnum opus* an indispensable source book and a boon to researchers and serious scholars of religious studies.

The Sikh Review
March 1998

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The Heritage of the Sikh

*G.S. Talib**

In this impressively produced book in large format, the author has given what may be called ‘glimpses’ of the fervent life of the Sikh people during the five centuries since the inception of their faith in the Word of Guru Nanak. Such a description, however, should not be taken to imply lack of the more serious historical line of treatment of the subject, for even on a casual reading the work reveals itself as based on the most painstaking, detailed and deeply pondered study of the history and religion of the Sikhs. The religio-historical approach is essential particularly for treating adequately the history of the Sikh people, for more than in most cases the dynamic force behind the various crisis through which the Sikhs have all through their history passed, has come from the ideals embodied in their faith. And yet Sikh history does not reveal a theocratic, or what in the context of Indian conditions would be called a communal, bias. The Sikhs in the days of their power have been remarkably tolerant and humane and have never persecuted their former oppressors.

Although acknowledged to be the most important minority of India, they have shown themselves to be the least actuated by the desire to claim separatist and sectarian political advantages, and have contributed vastly to and initiated movements of a purely secular patriotic character. This paradox is resolved on realizing that the religion of the Sikhs, despite their unparalleled record of martyrdom and sacrifice extending through centuries, is essentially a humanitarian creed, stressing the ideal of ‘universal welfare’ (the equivalent of these words actually occurs in the Sikh daily prayer) rather than adherence to any narrow dogma or theological ritualism.

* Patiala

Consequently, the religion of the Sikh leads him to seek a path of fulfillment implicit in which is the realization of some of the highest ideals of the social life. His religious enthusiasm, as the progressive march of his history has shown, runs in the direction of realizing such values as have been formulated through a different orientation by the modern ideas of patriotism, equality, democracy and socialism. Narrating the story of the Sikh people, which except for a brief spell of rule over the Punjab, has been made up of sacrifice and stirring revolutionary activity calls for that deep and total understanding of a movement which comes to the historian only when, besides garnering facts, he also has something like the poetic vision - the gift of a Carlyle or a Toynbee. Such understanding has been achieved and imparted in this book, which presents perhaps the most soulful and satisfying account of the Sikhs. Such a description is not exaggerated, for the narrative of the events of this heroic story makes explicit also those mighty spiritual and ethical urges which impelled them. One sees herein established the relationship between the humane, idealistic and clean conduct of the Sikh people and the lofty teachings and examples of their Guru-Preceptors.

The deep understanding and susceptibility of the author make him, of course, deeply involved with the events whose story he has narrated. That is obvious from the comments which now and then break through the reserve which his high sense of intellectual discipline has imposed on his manner. But despite such involvement, his interpretation of the events which he has narrated is characterized by a catholicity and fairness of approach even towards those whose actions have proceeded from malice and barbarity towards his own people. Throughout one's reading one catches the overtones which place the Sikh struggle against orthodoxy and tyranny in the wide universal context of the expanding tight of man against the powers of darkness and evil. That is wherein the significance and value of the history of the Sikhs lies for the people of our country. This essential aspect of the Sikh story needed to be explained to a somewhat unsympathetic world, and to an India, largely ignorant of the Sikhs. There is abroad an attitude (not by any means rare) to look upon the Sikh as a freak, an oddity. But if you just pause and look behind the naive simple exterior of the Punjab peasant, which the Sikhs

overwhelmingly are, you will see in his soul the flame of earnestness and devotion, that force of faith which inspires men to move mountains. Before this flame will fall shriveled up all shallow scoffing and foppery. In this book you see this flame burning. As such its effect is akin to that of the most moving things in literature.

The story of the Sikhs has been brought up in this book to the ushering in of our Independence. It shows not only that the Sikhs have brought down from of old their 'heritage' of sacrifice and idealism, but that perhaps in this heritage is the inspiration for the country also to seek such heroic fulfillment as the Sikh has sought to achieve despite all the disabilities of his situation since the first unleashing of Mughal terror against him.

It would be sheer justice to call attention to the sensitive and meticulously accurate sense for the right word and the right sentence-structure of the writer, whose style has something of the quality even of Matthew Arnold, about which it has been said that in it urbanity did not preclude force. It has the unsuspected force which operates through cultivated restraint. The ordinary factual historian can make do with a pedestrian style involving no higher qualities than some accuracy and a little method. But in writing seeking to give expression to the deeper values and to touch the sources of imaginative and emotional effects, the indefinable touch of the artist in language is essential. Here is a writing which has maturity and is adequate to the expression of the deeper response which it seeks to evoke.

All this makes this book not only an extremely valuable addition to a comparatively less-known aspect of Indian history but, for the grace and power of its expression, a sheer delight to read.

The Sikh Review
December 1965

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The Heritage of the Sikhs

*Kuldip Singh Dhir**

Sikhism claims greater attention today as a world religion than ever before. The wide dispersal of the Sikhs after partition of 1947 has been one major factor. In recent years people in India, as also abroad, have evinced keen interest in them and their tradition. This has expanded the scope of Sikh studies which are emerging as a distinct academic discipline. New books keep flowing in. The latest and one that should rank as the most significant and reliable is the title under review.

The book narrates the epic story of the Sikhs and captures the essential nuances of their religious and cultural inheritance in terms authentic as well as sensitive. The intellectual and spiritual credentials of its author eminently qualify him for undertaking such a task. He has accomplished it with the sweep of a cultural historian and the discipline of a theologian.

An introductory overview followed by an essay on the Founder and the quintessence of his revelation form the first two chapters of this work. In the next four, the author moves on to delineating the process of consolidation of the Sikh faith in the hands of the successive Gurus. The true nature of the Guruship which passed on from one Guru to the next has been explained in the image of one candle lighting another. Thus the author points out, the real Guru is God, who is the source of all light. He warns us not to confuse the Guru with the human forms (the unlit candle). Equally significant is his contribution in authoritatively establishing how the Tenth Master sealed the line of personal Guruship and passed on the succession to the holy Granth. For Sikhs the Guru Granth has since then been the Guru. Through it Guru Nanak lives on in the Sikh faith and tradition as a reality

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transcending time and space. This awareness of the continuing presence of Guru Nanak has been of crucial to the Sikh community as a whole as well as to its members individually.

The first part thus sums up the historical and theological facets of Sikhism. Professor Harbans Singh is gentle, but firm and uncompromising on the basic issues. The western scholars will definitely get, from this account, clarity on the essentials of the Sikh faith which several of them have failed to grasp. The author asserts that Guru Nanak's teaching can truly be understood in its own terms, i.e., an autonomous revelation. Attempts at tracing kinship between Guru Nanak and the Bhakti reformers will be misleading, he points out.

Challenges posed to the nascent Sikh faith and the bold response of the community immediately after Guru Gobind Singh form the subject matter of the three chapters that follow. Describing the Sikh struggle for sovereignty in the eighteenth century, the author brings out how that was a time of grim trial and supreme moral exaltation which accrued to the Sikhs because of their heroic struggle for their faith as also their perseverance in meeting the challenge of a sustained and fierce persecution. Two commanding figures of this period were Banda Singh Bahadur and, after him, Nawab Kapur Singh, the founder of the Dal Khalsa. The testing moments reached the highest point of severity with the Sikhs becoming a target of Ahmad Shah Durrani's repeated invasions.

The chapters that follow bring into sharp focus the rise and fall of the Sikh empire. The man of destiny was Ranjit Singh, who integrated the twelve Sikh principalities into the sovereign state of the Khalsa. We find here a vivid account of his early life, his occupation of the throne of Lahore and expansion of his kingdom. There are here some very insightful observations on the policy and character of the Maharaja.

We get a glimpse of the pageantry of the Sikh court in chapter XIII. The occasion is Lord William Bentinck's meeting with Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Ropar, on the banks of the River Sutlej. The human aspect receives no less importance in this description than the political and the spectacular. They have established such precise standards of regal usage and hospitality was remarkable for one born to a small worldly inheritance as was the Maharaja. Another example of the Maharaja's love of magnificence and éclat was the wedding of his

grandson, Nau Nihal Singh so picturesquely and dramatically delineated in another chapter.

The spirit of stern religious discipline and sacrifice which had supported the Sikhs through a critical period of their history and lead them to power was dimmed in the pomp and splendour of sovereignty. Thus Ranjit Singh's death left a deep hiatus The process of British expansion, which had temporarily been halted by him, was after his death, set on its inexorable course. The author unfolds in significant detail the tragic drama of intrigue and murder that followed.

The Sikhs were deeply galled at the fall of their kingdom, but not unduly dismayed: The peaceful spell which followed, however, produced an attitude of unwariness. Conventional and superstitious ritual, forbidden by the Guru, started gaining an increasing hold over the Sikh mind. For once, absorption into ceremonial Hinduism seemed the course inevitably set for them. The author explains how a series of protestant currents that arose purified the prevalent religious usage and rekindled the Sikh spirit. The process of reclamation is the theme taken up in Chapters 17 to 19. We cannot but concur with the author's findings that because of the rather restricted scope and because of the schismatic character they acquired, both the (original) Nirankari, and Namdhari movements failed to stir the Sikh people as a whole. The Singh Sabha movement which followed, however, touched Sikhism to its very roots and made it a living force once again. It brought a new dimension to the inner life of the community and enlarged its heritage. The author extensively quote from contemporary Sikh newspapers, Christian Mission records and Punjab administrative reports to bring out the nature of the identity crisis faced by Sikhsim in those times.

Sikhism at this moment looked to the future as well. It accepted the principle of change and renovation and exhibited sensitiveness to contemporary needs. One of the more concretely formulated urges was for western-style education so that the Sikhs might refurbish their own religious and literary conventions and march with the time.

The motivation for reform born of the Singh Sabha created a popular upsurge in the shape of the Akali movement. Provocation for this was afforded by the clergy who had come into control of the Sikh holy places from the time the Sikhs were driven by Mughal oppression to seek safety in remote hills and deserts. Most of the clerics had converted ecclesiastical assets into private properties and their lives

were not free from the taint of licentiousness and luxury. They had supplanted the simple form of Sikh service in the shrines by extravagant ceremonial. All this was repugnant to Sikhs freshly affranchised by the preaching of the Singh Sabha and they revolted against this. While attempting to wrest the control of *gurdwaras* from the priests, they came into clash with Government. In this confrontation, they added another dimension to their heritage of patient suffering for their faith.

Thus, the reformation of the Sikh shrines, beginning with the Singh Sabha was completed by the Akali movement which determined the political style of the Sikhs. The Muslim's demand for recognition of their separate political identity came as the first severe challenge to their position in the land of their birth. Finding themselves reduced to a state of political inferiority because of the new political arrangements, the Sikhs began to press for their own rights. They demanded to be treated on a par with the Muslims in the matter of political rights. Professor Harbans Singh has minutely analysed the trends and events of this period.

The creation of Pakistan was preceded and followed by another period of suffering for the Sikhs. Sikh habitations were wiped out, *gurdwaras* desecrated. In the rural areas of western Punjab, where they were severely outnumbered by the Muslims, they were subjected to murder and indignity. The author points out that in the face of this ruthless onslaught, the Sikhs reproduced once again their inheritance of courageous and heroic action. Many won laurels of martyrdom while trying to protect their *gurdwaras* from desecration. The Sikhs added to their *ardas* new stirring lines as they had done at all difficult periods of their history.

Last two chapters of the book trace the process of Sikh remobilization which followed the partition of the country. The author observes that the turmoil sharpened the sense of survival of the community. According to the analysis of the author, what irked and saddened them most was the disavowal of Panjabi language by the Hindu majority in Punjab. The Sikhs perceived in this rejection bigotry of the majority community, who identified Panjabi with their religious custom and culture. According to his thesis, Panjabi became in this way a crucial symbol of Sikh self-definition. This marked the beginning of another period of struggle for them. Their most intimate concern at this moment was the retention of their historical and cultural individuality. In political terms this concern found expression in the

demand for a Panjabi speaking State. The book presents an authentic and analytical survey of the long-drawn-out struggle for this demand, which was conceded in 1966. This is termed in the book as the moment of fulfilment.

The book thus presents a kaleidoscopic view of the Sikh heritage accumulated over the past 500 years. The author maintains throughout a remarkable homogeneity and progression in argument. He is thoroughly conversant with the western concepts of cultural historiography. Yet the well-springs of his intellect are here in the Sikh tradition.

Excellence of scholarship as well as of style is the hallmark of this very distinguished book. The author has woven into it a vast range of facts culled from diverse sources, setting them in a proper interpretative context. Old chronicles, manuscripts, rare documents, government records and contemporary newspapers have been drawn upon for this purpose.

Professor Harbans Singh deserves our tribute of admiration for creating in the field of Sikh learning a work of such abiding value and of such classical grace and discipline. The facility and impeccability of the writing cannot but impress the best connoisseurs of the English language. The book will be read with interest by the specialist as well as by the lay reader.

The Sikh Review
September 1983

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The Heritage of the Sikhs

*Bhagat Singh**

This work is the story of a people who are deeply attached to their faith and whose outward symbols have imparted them a distinct individuality and preserved them from being assimilated within the larger Indian complex of Hinduism.

The word Sikh, meaning a disciple, came to be used for the followers of Guru Nanak and his nine successors. The Sikh Gurus who were originally Khatris attracted a large following comprising various subs-castes of the Hindus. Guru Arjun is said to have converted almost the entire Jat peasantry of the Majha tract and there could be little doubt that by the time of Guru Hargobind most of the Jats of the Majha, Malwa and Doaba had embraced Sikhism and they formed the preponderant element in the Sikh community. The character of the Jats imperceptibly modified the Sikh system as it was bound to be. Almost all writers are agreed that one of the fundamental traits in the Jat character has been the instinct of tribal freedom and of tribal kinship. The role of the Jat Sikhs was of considerable importance in the evolution of the Khalsa Panth particularly for the developments which took place during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the change or shifts from Khatri to Jat leadership in the community. The new feature of Sikhism came to represent the dominance of that Jat culture which Guru Gobind Singh had proclaimed in 1699 as the essentials of Sikhism. Love of freedom and war like spirit of the Jats could no longer be denied a place within the system. All the Sikh movements launched in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries were spearheaded by the rural Jat Sikhs who were the most important and a powerful class among the Sikhs. They are very manly and virile race about whom Lepel Griffin remarked, "the Jat race is,

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for manliness, honest, strength and courage, second to no race in the world." And half a century earlier an English officer of the Bengal Army wrote in 1808 about the Sikhs (particularly the Jat Sikhs) that 'they are just and amiable... One quality particularly raises the character of the Sikhs above all other Asiatics and that is, their higher veneration for truth...They are plain, hospitable and industrious people, and by far the best race 1 have ever met in India.' With this racial composition of the Sikhs in mind we proceed to study them.

In his work Professor Harbans Singh has depicted a panorama of Sikh history from the birth of Guru Nanak in 1469 to his 500th birth anniversary in 1969. This work has been split up into 25 chapters. In the introductory the learned author discusses briefly the external milieu, the outward symbols and professions of the Sikhs and also their qualities of head and heart, their religious places and practices, their struggle against religious persecution, etc. From the second to the sixth chapter the author traces the development of Sikhism from its founder to the creation of the Khalsa, laying special stress on the institutions of Sangat, Pangat, Manji system, Masand system, and the abolition of Purdah. and Sati among the Sikhs. The compilation of the Adi Granth by Guru Arjan has been a great step in giving a distinct identity to the Sikhs.

The author has critically examined the attitude of the Sikhs towards the state consequent on Guru Arjun's martyrdom and the measures undertaken by Guru Hargobind for the preservation of the community, The Bhakti and Shakti were combined as essential ingredients of Sikhism. After a brief respite under the seventh and eighth Masters the ninth Guru had again to bear the cross that displayed a superb act of self-giving and of complete reliance on God's Will. Guru Gobind Singh provided a unique example at the initiation ceremony in which he, the supreme head of a religious organisation voluntarily surrendered his authority to his disciples by asking them to baptise him as he had baptised them a short while ago. His shaking them out of their lassitude and create in them a will to action is one of the miracles of history.

In the next few chapters the learned author traces the Sikh movement under Banda Singh and then a little later under Nawab Kapur Singh who 'step by step built up the sovereignty of the Khalsa and by the time he retired he had conferred on the Dal the lineaments of an independent state'. The author proceeds further to describe the

turn in history when the Sikhs found themselves amidst a quadrangular contest, each planning the ouster of the others. The Mughals wanted to perpetuate their rule in the Punjab, the Afghans wanted to convert it into a province of Afghanistan, the Marathas wanted to extend their rule to the Punjab and the Sikhs were fighting a life and death struggle for establishing their sway over it.

In chapters from X to XVI dealing with Maharaja Ranjit Singh's house upto the annexation of the Punjab by the British the author has elaborated on the occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh, the conferment of the title of Sarkar (not Maharaja) on him on the Baisakhi day of 1801, the Treaty of Amritsar (1809), some of his conquests, and foreigners at the Sikh court who gave their observations about the Maharaja's shrewd inquisitiveness, his gay court and sumptuous hospitality. The author also depicts the pageantry at Lord William Bentinck's meeting with Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Ropar, it being a most spectacular occasion in the history of the Anglo-Indian relations. After the description of colourful and gorgeous celebration of prince Naunihal Singh's marriage and the distribution in a single day, of a sum of twenty lakh rupees as charity, the author narrates the pathetic scenes of the king killings in Lahore. The deaths of Maharaja Kharak Singh and his son Naunihal Singh were followed by the murders of Maharaja Sher Singh and his son prince Partap Singh.

Next came the two Sikh wars with the British and the annexation of the Punjab in shameful violation of the British commitment to safeguard the interests of' the young Maharaja Duleep Singh. It is an instance in which a guardian has visited its own misdeeds upon his ward. The British Government was the self-constituted guardian of Maharaja Duleep Singh and the regent of his kingdom. A rebellion was provoked by the agents of the guardian who punished that ward by confiscating his kingdom.

The author then enters upon a new phase of Sikh history which witnesses some dynamic reform movements among the Sikhs, including the Nirankari Movement, Namdhari Movement, Singh Sabha Movement, Ghadar Movement, Gurdwara Reform Movement and Babbar Akali Movement. 'The Singh Sabha Movement enhanced the intellectual capacity of the Sikhs and restored to them their creedal unity and religious conscience. It opened for them the doors of modern progress and endowed them with the strength and adaptability to match the pressures created by the new social and scientific currents. The

learned author has brilliantly brought out the motives and the achievements of this movement. The last chapter deals with the creation of the Punjabi Suba despite Government being stubbornly set against the demand of such a state. And the book concludes with a passing reference to the quinquecentennial of Guru Nanak's birth in 1969.

The last few chapters particularly those dealing with the twentieth century Sikh politics and their contribution to India's struggle for independence and post-independence period upto 1969 have been analytically studied. Probably Professor Harbans Singh's is the first and balanced study in the very recent past of the Sikhs. The learned author must have taken a lot of pains to collect the accurate data and material in a very convincing manner. The erudite scholar has his own unique style of writing with a marvelous command over English language. His thoughts and feelings are personal and so his language is personal. The language always, receives a certain fresh impress from the hands of a writer of a strongly marked personality. *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, with all its rich exuberance, has found a wonderful expression at the hands of a seasoned and gifted writer and an outstanding scholar of Sikhism. He has very ably brought out the most distinctive features of the Sikhs as individuals and as a community, with whom none in the world can match in their spirit of sacrifice, humility and bravery.

Though this work lacks documentation the author always bases himself on most reliable sources of information, mainly on contemporary ones which he often refers to in the text.

Undoubtedly this book is an excellent study of the Sikhs which will be much rewarding for any reader.

The Panjab Past and Present
April 1984

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The Heritage of the Sikhs

*Nirbhai Singh**

The Heritage of the Sikhs was first revised in 1982 when it had remained out of print for nearly two decades. The present edition (1994) is a revised and enlarged version of the earlier two versions. As new source materials have been pouring in, our author has continuously and meticulously revised the contents of the work. He has substantially modified it with new innovating facts and events which took place in the Akali politics. Most interesting addition in this edition is a chapter on '1984' which provides a photographic narration of the Operation Bluestar on the Golden Temple complex and the Akal Takht, and vigorous developments in the Sikh struggle for sovereignty. It has aroused curiosity among peoples of the world over to know about the beliefs, scriptures and philosophy of the Sikhs. Professor Harbans Singh vividly chronicles the vital historical events of the Sikh community. He also makes mention of important personalities who played significant role in the development of Sikh tradition.

The merit of the book is its synoptic vivid delineation of the Sikhs' heritage since the genesis of the Sikh faith and the Sikh tradition which waded through chequered history of turmoils, massacres and *dharam yudha morcha* (struggle for righteousness). It beautifully blends in a simple style the vision of historian and litterateur. There is no denying the fact that Sikh Gurus created history of this region and gave a new turn to the Indian history as well. The *élan vital* of the Sikh ideology is the dynamic view of life. It motivated them to struggle against tyranny of the Mughal emperors. The very birth of Sikhism is an active resistance to evil. Professor Harbans Singh over the years developed a deep sense of sensibility and insight into Sikh faith, The underlying spirit of the Sikh praxis has been coherently explained from the beginning to date. The author chronicles

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the Sikh history between fiction and historiography. He tries to be devotional in his exposition. He does not make effort to scrape sharp distinction between history and legend, hagiographical accounts and mythical elements involved in the source materials. The work reveals itself as based on the most painstaking, detailed and deeply pondered study of the history and religion of the Sikhs.

In the elegantly-produced work of hard labour, the author highlights glimpses of the dynamic life-style of the Sikhs who played vital role in carrying out the new heroic contours of the Sikh history. It is a repertoire of the fervent life of the Sikh people during the five centuries. Narrating the story of the Sikhs which except for a brief spell of the rule over the Punjab, has been made up of sacrifice and stirring revolutionary activities calls for deep and holistic grasp of the Sikh Movement while garnering facts. Our author is successful in presenting perhaps the most soulful and satisfying account of the Sikhs. Such a description is a candid and lively narrative of the events of this heroic story.

The deep dedication and realistic understanding of the author make him involved with the vicissitudes of the events whose story he has narrated. This is obvious from the high sense of the intellectual discipline he has evinced. But despite such involvement, his interpretation of the facts, events and personalities is characterised by objectivity and catholicity. He is fair even towards those who have inflicted malice and atrocity on the Sikhs. Throughout both the overtones of Sikh struggle against orthodoxy and tyranny are visible. This essential aspect of the Sikh history needs to be explained to the scholars of the world and to the unsympathetic Indians who are largely prejudiced about the Sikhs. There is a general attitude created by certain elements in India to look upon the Sikhs as a freak and oddity, as almost the subject of a comic ethnic character. But if you see the countryside of the Punjab, the Sikh peasant you will find in his heart of hearts has the flame of earnestness devotion and adventures in life. This is the message of Sikh faith as well. The reader will find this flame burning in all the leafs of the book. As such the book will have an indelible trail of impact on the reader.

As stated in the beginning, the story of the Sikhs has been traced in his book to the Action Bluestar of 1984. It should not be misunderstood that the Sikhs's heritage of sacrifice and idealism has been glorified, but that perhaps in this heritage is the inspiration for the rest of the country to follow such heroic tradition. It is unfortunate that the Sikhs, by and large, after 1984 have been dubbed as separatists though they have a glorious

history of sacrifices for the motherland. I am of the firm view that the injured psyche of the Sikhs has developed a feeling of alienation from its social and political milieu. It will be in the interest of the country to make a thorough investigation into the cases of injury to the psyche of the Sikhs and redress their genuine grievances. In a pluralistic society of ethnic diversities, regional dissension, and religious multiplicity. The Sikhs deserve to enjoy a sense of dignity. It will then bring them back to the main stream of the land and will be beneficial for national unity of the country.

Sikh movement in letter and spirit does not promote separatism and crude secularity. It is to encompass both. This paradox will disappear on realizing that the Sikh faith, despite its glorious records of martyrdom and sacrifice extending through five centuries, is essentially a humanitarian creeds advocating the welfare of all (*sarbat da bhala*). These values and ideals were preached and practised by the Sikh Gurus in the course of development of history. Their ideals and values are harmonious with differently, formulated by the modern ideals of patriotism, equality, fraternity and democracy.

On the whole, the book is a fount of well-knit Information about the Sikh heritage. it would be apt to call attention of the readers to the sensitive and meticulously accurate sense of choice of appropriate words and pithy sentences and the writer, whose style has a fervour of wordsworthian simplicity. The ordinary historian might have made the narration boredom with a pedestrian of historiographical tools. But the author gives expression to the higher Sikh values with a view to evoking appreciative and Imaginative effects. Here is a book having the indefinable touch to the artist in language and maturity of style. All this makes this book an extremely valuable and permanent companion for the readers of all walks of life.

The Sikh Review
February 1995

Letters of Professor Harbans Singh

The following letters written by Professor Harbans Singh show his style, subject and relations with Dr. Ganda Singh:

Government College
Muktsar
June 22, 1959

My dear Sardar Ji,

I need some material on partition. Could you kindly send me some books dealing with the subject? 'Mission with Mountbatten', 'Muslim League Attack' and a few others that you could think of. There must be some books in the Public Library also.

I had planned to spend part of the vacation with you, but the word (vacation) is, as I have already discovered, hardly applicable in the case of one who has the responsibility of the office...

With respects

Yours affectionately
Harbans Singh

Dr. Ganda Singh
Lower Mall,
Patiala

A-1, Punjabi University Campus
Patiala
August 8, 1967

My dear Sardar Ji,

It was extremely kind of you to have written upon your arrival in Malayasia and I am indeed grateful that you spared us the thought in the midst of a busy schedule... The Vice-Chancellor and myself will be attending a seminar at Bangalore in the first week of September. The subject: The Study of Religion in Indian Universities. I have to do a paper on Sikh studies and will be going into town to look over a few books relevant to this theme.

Kindly do let me know if we can do anything for you from here.

With our respectful regards,

Yours affectionately
Harbans Singh

Dr. Ganda Singh
Care of Sardar Joginder Singh,
15, College Road,
Tanjong Mazim, Malaysia

Letters from Professor Harbans Singh to Sirdar Kapur Singh

My dear Sirdar Sahib,

You have done me an extraordinary favour and I shall never be able to thank you enough for it. It was most kind and gracious of you to have let me see this article on Bhai Randhir Singh before it was sent for publication. May I also say with how much advantage I have read it. Beyond the subject of the anniversary which has occasioned it, the essay goes to the very roots of the structure of Sikh religiousness and tradition, knowledge and insights from amazingly diverse fields and disciplines have been brought to the points taken up. Who else could have written with such authority, with such cogency and conviction and with such incisiveness and fluency of phrase? The Panth will continue to be proud of you.

Harbans Singh
The Sikh Review,
August 1978

Dear Sardar Sahib,

Dr. Attar Singh did send me your essay - and took the precaution of having the packet registered. It was good serious reading, and I went through it twice over. In a contemporary reference frame and in contemporary intellectual idiom, it is a masterly exposition of the Sikh teaching and Sikh way of life. Characteristically, insights from many diverse fields such as philosophy, religion, literature, art, psychology and sociology have been brought to working out the thesis. The writing is, as always superb - so cogent, so immaculate.. There is not one word in the entire essay which will bear substitution - such is the precision and harmony of phrase. The chapter will aptly round off your book which we stall he looking forward to seeing in print. Meanwhile, my congratulations - and my compliments.

With my best regards.

Harbans Singh
The Sikh Review
May 1980

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਨਿਰਮਲਾ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਪੱਤਰ ਲਿਖੇ ਸਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੂਖ਼ਮ ਖੋਜ-ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕੁੱਝ-ਇਕ ਪੱਤਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਥੇ ਵਰਨਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

30 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1984

ਪਰਮ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ

ਬਾਬਾ ਕੌਲ ਜੀ ਵਾਲਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਆਪ ਦਾ ਲੇਖ ਪੁੱਜ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਇਕ ਬੜੀ ਉੱਤਮ ਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਹੈ। ਮੇਰਾ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਨਾ। ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ਼ਾਂ ਜੋ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇੰਨੀ ਖੇਚਲ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਉਹ ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਲਾਭਕਾਰੀ ਹੋਣਗੀਆਂ। ਪੰਡਿਤ ਬਸੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਾਲਾ ਲੇਖ ਵੀ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਭੇਜ ਦੇਣਾ।

ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਲੇਖ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਦੋ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਉਤਪੰਨ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਕਿਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਕੌਲ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ? ਆਪ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ: “ਬਾਬਾ ਹਰਿਜੀ ਇਸ ਨਵ-ਜਨਮੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਚੁੱਕ ਕੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਹਜ਼ੂਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਏ।” ਕਿੱਥੇ? ਬਾਬਾ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਕਿਸ ਨਗਰ ਵਿਚ ਸਨ? ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਚੇ ਇਹ ਮੁਹੱਮਦੀਪੁਰ ਹੀ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਬਾਬਾ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਪ੍ਰਿਥੀਚੰਦ ਕਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਹੇ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ? ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਦੇਹਾਂਤ ਕਿਸ ਸਥਾਨ 'ਤੇ ਹੋਇਆ? ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਸਕੋ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਕ੍ਰਿਤਗਯ ਹੋਵਾਂਗੇ।...

ਡੂੰਘੇ ਸਨੇਹ ਸਹਿਤ,

ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਹਿਤੂ
ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ

ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ
ਪਿੰਡ ਅਤੇ ਡਾਕਖ਼ਾਨਾ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ
ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ

9 ਜਨਵਰੀ 1985

ਮੇਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ,

ਫ਼ਤਹਿ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਹੋਵੇ। ਉਸ ਦਿਨ ਬਰਨਾਲੇ ਵਿਖੇ ਮੇਲ ਹੋਇਆ। ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨਤਾ ਹੋਈ। ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਸੀ, ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਮੈਂ ਸਾਰੀ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਲਈ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਐਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਸੰਤ ਅਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਲੇਖ ਲਿਖਵਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਲੇਖ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਭਾਈ ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਭਾਈ ਬੂਟਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਡੇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੀ। ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਡੇਰਾ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸੰਤ ਬੂਟਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਸਨ। ਮੈਂ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਤੱਥ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਠੀਕ ਹੋਣਗੇ। ਪਰੰਤੂ ਜੇ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ ਤਾਂ ਪਿੰਡ ਚੀਮਾ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਪਤਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਖੇਚਲ ਕਰਨਾ ਕਿ ਡੇਰੇ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚੱਲਿਤ ਨਾਂ ਕੀ ਹੈ।...

ਡੂੰਘੇ ਸਨੇਹ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ੁਭ ਕਾਮਨਾਵਾਂ ਸਹਿਤ,

ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਹਿਤੂ
ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ

ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ
ਪਿੰਡ ਅਤੇ ਡਾਕਖ਼ਾਨਾ ਕੋਠਾ ਗੁਰੂ
ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ

News about Professor Harbans Singh

Professor Harbans Singh invited to USA: The Sikh Review is pleased to announce that S. Harbans Singh, Registrar, Punjabi University, Patiala, and well-known Sikh scholar and educationist, is shortly proceeding to the United States of America on a tour of study of various major universities on the invitation of the United States Government. Whereas he will acquaint himself with the nature, scope and standard of Indian studies especially those having a bearing upon the Punjab history and culture, he will avail of the opportunity to acquaint the people of the USA with Sikhism. On his way back S. Harbans Singh will also visit some of the universities of Great Britain.

The Sikh Review
April 1964

Guru Gobind Singh Biography in Sixteen Languages: No subject is more intractable than the biography of charismatic hero, for, quite often, his life issuing in purposive but enigmatic action could lead to ambivalent conclusions. No wonder, biographers in such cases tend to adopt subjective, one-sided and extremist positions. Usually, such a situation arises when they lack authentic material, or are unable to enter sympathetically into the ethos and rationale of a given movement. That such a situation continued to obtain in respect of biographies dealing with Guru Gobind Singh was a painful reminder.

In observance of the 300th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh, therefore, the Guru Gobind Singh Foundation decided to have a popular but authentic biography written in English and have it rendered into all the principal languages of India.

ENGLISH

The work was entrusted to Sardar Harbans Singh, Registrar, Punjabi University, Patiala, who combines an essentially aesthetic sensibility with a rare devotion to the history of the Sikhs. His book

The Heritage of the Sikhs is acknowledged as an authentic and most readable story of the Sikhs movement.

This biography does full justice to the marvellous person and deeds of great Guru. A sane and balanced account, it nevertheless informed by piety and reverence. Here story has not been twisted to suit a particular theory or point of view. The emergent biography thus is probably the first significant work of its kind in the field.

The biography has simultaneously been rendered into the following languages:

> 1. Assamese, 2. Bengali, 3. Gujarati, 4. Hindi, 5. Kannada, 6. Kashmiri, 7. Maithili, 8. Malyalam, 9. Marathi, 10. Oriya, 11. Punjabi, 12. Sanskrit (both in prose and verse), 13. Sindhi, 14. Tamil, 15. Telegu.

ASSAMESE—Shri Narayan Dass, who translated this biography into Assamese, is Professor of Assamese at Pandu College, Gauhati.

BENGALI—Shri Upendra Kumar Das, who has translated the biography into Bengali, is a distinguished Bengali scholar and is at present, Head of the Department of Bengali at Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan. He is one of those gifted and sensitive scholars who were able to establish a complete identity with the spirit of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore.

GUJARATI—Shri A. B. Yajnik, Principal and Professor of Gujarati, Mithibai College of Arts and Chauhan Institute of Science, Vile Parle (West), Bombay, who undertook translation of the biography in Gujarati, is a well-known Gujarati litterateur and educationist.

HINDI—Shri Devendra Satyarthi, who has translated the biography into Hindi, is well known as Punjabi writer and folklorist. He also writes in Hindi and edited *Ajkal* for a number of years.

KANNADA—The Kannada translation the Foundation owes to the celebrated scholar and writer, Dr. D.R. Bendre. In his early seventies now, Shri Bendre has been the recipient of many academic and literary honours. He was awarded Doctorate of Letters (*Honoris Causa*) by the University of Mysore in recognition of his contributions to Kannada literature. He also received the Sahitya Academy Award in 1958 for his collection of Kannada poems, *Aralu-Maralu*.

KASHMIRI—Shri Bansi Nirdosh is a short story writer and journalist. He is currently associated with Radio Kashmir, Srinagar, as a staff

artist, and has published two short-story collections and two novels in Kashmiri.

MAITHILI—Shri Ramanath Jha, who has translated the biography into Maithili, has been deeply involved with the movement aimed at gaining recognition for Maithili as a distinct language. At present, he is Reader and Head of the Department of Maithili at Bihar University.

MALAYALAM—The Malayalam translation of the biography was done by the well-known Malayalam poet and Journalist, Shri N. Balakrishnan Nair. He has produced over half a dozen biographies of freedom fighters, saints, musicians, painters and poets of India.

MARATHI—Madhav Manohar, who translated the biography in Marathi, is well known as a novelist, playwright, short-story writer and critic. His Marathi adaptations of several foreign classics are held in very high esteem.

OR1YA—Dr. M. Mansinha, who has translated the biography into Oriya, is an eminent educationist and scholar.

PUNJABI—Sardar Attar Singh, who has rendered the biography into Punjabi, is a leading Punjabi critic. He is Development Officer (Punjabi) at the Punjabi University, Patiala.

SANSKRIT—Dr. Shrutikant Sharma has translated the biography into Sanskrit (prose). He has taught Sanskrit at colleges in the Punjab and is a well-known scholar and writer.

Dr. Satyavrat, who has rendered the biography into Sanskrit verse, is a Reader in Sanskrit at Delhi University. His is a name well-known in the field of Sanskrit studies.

SINDHI—The Sindhi translation is the work of Shri H.I. Sadarangani who has distinguished himself as a scholar of Persian literature. He received his Ph.D. in Persian literature from Bombay University and D.Litt. from Teheran University.

TAMIL—Shri R. Ramanujachari, who has translated the biography into Tamil, recently retired as Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy, and Dean, Faculty of Philosophy and Education, at Annamalai University. His is a name widely respected in the fields of Tamil letters and Indian philosophy.

TELEGU—Dr. B. Rama Raju is Reader in Telegu at Osmania University. He is a distinguished Telegu scholar and writer.

URDU—The Urdu biography has been written originally by Shri Ranbir Singh. He is an eminent Punjab journalist and a celebrated Urdu writer. He edits an Urdu daily paper, the *Milap*.

The Sikh Review
November 1967

Harvard University Observes Guru Nanak Quinquecentennial: The Harvard University observed the Quinquecentennial of Guru Nanak's birth by holding on April 30, 1969, a public lecture in the Divinity School on the subject of "Guru Nanak as Historical Memory and Continuing Reality in the Sikh Tradition". The speaker was Sardar Harbans Singh of Punjabi University, Patiala. Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Director of the Centre for the Study of World Religions, who presided over the function introduced the speaker to the audience which included some faculty students and members of the Sikh community. Professor Smith described Sikh Religion as one of the world religions. After the lecture, a religious service took place in the Centre for the Study of World Religions with recitations of Guru Nanak's hymns from the Guru Granth.

The Sikh Review
July 1969

Sikh Prayer Service at Kyoto: A feature of the World Conference on Religion and Peace held at Kyoto (Japan) last winter was the prayer services from different religious traditions which formed part of the various sessions. The proceedings concluded with the Sikh prayer service (*ardas*) led by Professor Harbans Singh of Punjabi University, Patiala.

This Sikh prayer (*ardas*) consists of three parts. First there will be quotations from the Sikhs' scripture, followed by the Sikh liturgical service which Sikhs, individually and in congregations, say morning and evening and indeed whenever they pray at the beginning and conclusion of family, public or religious functions. Lastly, there will be words which are improvised and added to the service to suit a given occasion. This service is offered standing and may I request the august assembly to kindly rise in their seats.

Unto the One True God Who by His own grace is realized.

*** ***

The One lord God is the father of all;
Of the One Lord are we the children.

*** ***

The Allah, i.e., God, first created light;
From this light are all men made.
From One light the entire universe took its being.
Who should then he called high and who low?
Let not doubt mislead thee, brother!
The Creator is in the creation,
The creation in the Creator,
The Creator is in all places at all times.
It is the same clay which the Creator has fashioned into different forms.

*** ***

City sorrowless is this place called;
There is no pain or grief in this land,
Nor any fear or tribute or tax,
Neither danger, nor error; neither dread, nor decline.
Admirable is this abode for me.
Everlasting peace reigns here, my brethren!
Everlasting is the sovereignty of this city!!
All citizens are alike:
There is no ranking of first or second here.
Eternally famous is this habitat.
Contentment is the rule here.
Everyone here has the freedom,
No one is restrained or obstructed.
Says Ravidas the cobbler from caste released:
Whosoever liveth here is my friend esteemed.

*** ***

The temple and the mosque are the same,
So are the Hindu worship and the Muslim *namaz*.
Men are all one,
Different as their appearances might be.
Gods and demons,
The musicians celestial,
The Hindus and the Muslims

Are all one,
Different as their appearances might be.
Gods and demons,
The musicians celestial,
The Hindus and the Muslims
Are all one,
Different as their habits might be -
the reflection of their different environments.
But all men have the same eyes, the same body,
The same form made of the same four elements,
Earth, air, fire and water.
Thus the Abhekh of the Hindus and the Allah of the Muslims are one,
The Quran and the Purans praise the same Lord.
Men are all of one form,
The One Lord made them all.

*** ***

The One Transcendent!
His is the victory!!
Ode to Almighty by the Tenth King.

Remember, first, God the Almighty: think then of *Guru* Nanak; of Angad Guru and Amar Dass, and Ram Dass. May their protection be ever with us! Remember Arjun, Hargobind and the Holy Har Rai. Let us think of the holy Harkrishan whose sight annuls all sorrow. Let us remember Tegh Bahadur, and all the nine treasures shall be ours. May He protect us everywhere! May the Tenth King, the holy Guru Gobind Singh, the lord of hosts, master of the hawk, and protector of faith, help us every-where!

Turn your thoughts, O Khalsa, to the Guru Granth Sahib, the visible body of the Gurus and their Word, and say

Wahiguru, Glory be to God!

The five Loved Ones, the Guru's four sons, the Forty Saved, and other holy and heroic men, saints and martyrs: remember their selfless and heroic deeds, and say

Wahiguru, Glory be to God!

Those who, with the Lord's Name in their hearts, shared their earnings with others; who plied the sword and practised charity;

who overlooked the faults of their neighbours: think of their deeds, and say

Wahiguru, Glory be to God!

Those men and women, who laid down their lives in the cause of Religion, who suffered themselves to be cut up limb by limb, and had their scalps scraped off, were broken on the wheel, were sawn or flayed alive and yet uttered not a moan from their lips, and remained steadfast in their Sikh faith to the last hair of their sacred tresses (*kesa*) and their last breath: think of their sweet resignation, and say.

Wahiguru, Glory be to God!

Those who, to purge the places of worship of corruption long-standing, suffered themselves to be ruthlessly beaten or imprisoned, to be shot, cut up, or burnt alive, but did not make any resistance nor uttered a word of complaint: think of their patient faith and fortitude, and say.

Wahiguru, Glory be to God!

Think of all the Gurdwaras, the places of divine remembrance, the thrones of religious authority, and other paces hallowed by the touch of the Guru's feet, and say.

Wahiguru, Glory be to God!

The whole Khalsa offer their prayer. Let the whole Khalsa bring to their minds the Name of the Wonderful Lord: And as they think of Him, may they rejoice in His blessing. May they bring peace and comfort to the whole world. May God's protection and grace extend to all the Khalsa wheresoever's they are. May charity, justice and faith flourish. May the Khalsa be forever in the ascendant. May the Sikh choirs, banners. mansions of the Khalsa be eternally blessed. May the kingdom of justice prevail! May the believers be united in love! May the hearts of the believers be humble, high their wisdom, and may they be guided in their wisdom by the Lord. O Khalsa, say,

Wahiguru, Glory be to God!

Save us, O Father, from lust, wrath, greed, attachment and pride; and keep us attached always to Thy feet.

Grant to Thy Sikhs the gift of faith, the gift of Thy Name, the

gift of trust in Thee, and the gift of recitation and of comprehension of Thy holy Word.

Give us light, give us understanding so that we may know Thy Will. Forgive us our sins. Bring us into the fellowship of only those in whose company we may remember Thy Name.

We make this prayer in Thy presence, Lord!

“Entrust unto the Lord what thou wishest to be accomplished. The Lord will bring all matters to fulfillment: know this as truth evidenced by Himself.”

“The world is burning in fire. Save it, in Thy mercy. Save it Lord, through means that please Thee.”

O true Master, loved Father, here in this city of Kyoto, in Japan, had assembled representatives of world religions - men of faith who believe in Thee. This conclave is now concluding its week-long deliberations in behalf of world peace. Lord, give the members of this Conference Thy blessing and Thy guidance. Grant unto them the power and ability to constantly endeavour and pursue the goal they have set themselves. Extend Thy blessing and Thy grace to Thy servants and bless their humble efforts. This Conference has concluded its sessions without obstruction. This is Thy favour! May the efforts of this Conference and the efforts of other individuals and associations similarly concerned succeed in eradicating the causes and apprehension of war, inequality, violence, hatred and jealousy. May love and service prosper and may there be peace and justice permanently established in the world. May the seed that has been sown here in Kyoto under Thy inspiration thrive and may this initiative, undertaken humbly, for the sake of peace turn into a worldwide movement freeing men’s hearts and the human community of the prevalent apprehensions and discords!

May this prayer be accepted at Thy door!

May God’s name, may the human spirit forever triumph, Nanak! And in Thy Will may peace and prosperity come to one and all!!

Blessed is he who utters His name,
The Timeless is the Eternal Reality.

The Spokesman Weekly,
Guru Nanak Number, 1971.

New Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University: We are glad to note that Dr. Amrik Singh, Secretary of the Inter-University board, New Delhi, has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the Punjabi University by the Governor of Punjab, on retirement of Mrs. I.K. Sandhu.

We consider it a right choice after Professor Harbans Singh, who, when sounded for the post, preferred his present undertaking of a very important and exacting nature of compiling the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism.

The Sikh Review
January 1978

The Sikh Students Federation: In sending greetings and good wishes to young Sikh men and women participating in the 3-day camp of the Sikh Students Federation held at Guru Nanak Ashram, Patiala, from October 12 to 14, Professor Harbans Singh, Professor of Sikh Studies, and Editor *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Punjabi University Patiala, writes:

> In this fast-changing, eventful world, the Sikhs fortunately still seem to be in possession of a large part of their spiritual inheritance. For me personally, one reverberating evidence of this fact is the platform of the Sikh Students' Federation. This forum of the Sikh youth holds fast to the ideals and traditions of Sikhism. Under its auspices, Sikh young men and women have been renewing their allegiance to their religious faith, to its special history and ideology. Through it they have become acquainted with its principles and customs. At its camps at Paonta Sahib and at other sacred sites, they have experienced the fervour and joy of Sikh living. Since its birth in the early 40s, I have watched - somewhat distantly but not entirely unconcernedly - the Sikh Students' witness to how it enhanced the quality of their conviction and to how it chiselled their ideological loyalty. This was brought home to me dramatically in recent years when I met, in the United States, one of the Federation's past presidents. That past president is now a full professor at an American university. He is completely dedicated to his profession, and has won considerable renown in his area

> of scientific study. He takes part in seminars and conferences round the globe. He is the author of a large number of learned papers as well as of books. He is now an American citizen, married to an American. He is successful man in every sense of the term. By his current interests and domicile, he is far, far removed from India, from Punjab. Yet, in an intimate conversation one day, he disclosed to me that his one ambition in life was to write a history of the Sikh Students Federation. I sat for the moment rooted to my seat - speechless - as I heard these words. I have since reflected upon upon this phenomenon several times, and wondered at the magic the Sikh Students' Federation cast on the minds of our youth. This magic it still commands - which is a happy, healthy sign. I wish the Federation success, further success in its task of keeping the Sikh spirit.

The Sikh Review has hopes and faith too in the young men of the Sikh Students' Federation that they would retrieve the honour of the Community from the quagmire of low down towards which it is slipping.

The Sikh Review
October 1979

Professor Harbans Singh Conferred Life Fellowship: On attaining the age of superannuation, Sardar Harbans Singh, Professor of Sikh Studies, and Editor, *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Punjabi University, Patiala retiring on 31st March 1981.

In recognizing of Professor Harbans Singh's distinguished service to Sikh letters, in the field of History and Religion, the Syndicate of the Punjabi University has conferred the fellowship on him.

Professor Harbans Singh joined the Punjabi University after its establishment in 1961, and in 1970 was appointed Head of Sikh Studies in Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies. He undertook a colossal, stupendous and exacting task of compiling *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, which is still under preparation. We are glad that after his retirement he will continue to work on the project. His love for the project can be gauged from the fact that he turned down the offer of Vice-chancellorship in favour of this commitment to the monumental work of labour and love.

The Sikh Review congratulates Professor Harbans Singh for the most deserving award and prays to Satguru for long, healthful and zestful life.

The Sikh Review
March 1981

Lecture on Sikhism in Berkeley: An International series of lectures on Sikhism may soon become a permanent annual feature at the university of California, Berkeley, one of the most prestigious university in America. If it does, it will be the first program of its kind at any university outside India. The first Sikh lecturers at Berkeley were delivered this year by Professor Harbans Singh, Editor-in-Chief of *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, in preparation at the Punjabi University at Patiala. The three lecturers he made as a special TV interview on Sikhism he gave were put on videotape and will be continued to be used on TV and for classes on Indian religions. If support from the local Sikh community is forthcoming, the university of Calefornia will be introducing courses in Punjabi and Sikh studies on a regular basis.

The Sikh Review
September 1982

Doctorate to Professor Harbans Singh: You would be pleased to know that Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, has awarded honorary doctorate in its last convocation held on March 27 to respected Professor Harbans Singh, Editor-in-chief, *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhsim*, Punjabi University, Patiala for his unique contribution in the fields of literature, Sikh Religion and Philosophy.

The Sikh Review felicitates the legendary scholar and indefatigable researcher Professor Harbans Singh and compliments Dr. G.S. Randhawa, Vice-chancellor, GND University for this fine gesture.

The Sikh Review
May 1991

Professor Harbans Singh Honoured: The SGPC honoured Professor Harbans Singh at Patiala on 17 August 1992 in a solemn ceremony. So far as the exegesis and exposition of the Sikh thought and theology are concerned, Professor Harbans Singh has no rival.

His work passes the strict test laid down by Trevelyam for a historian: one who combined the knowledge of evidence with the largest intellect, the warmest human sympathy and the highest imaginative power.

Professor Harbans Singh is also a fellow at Harvard University Centre for the Study of World Religions. Earlier back in 1981, Punjabi University, Patiala had awarded Life Fellowship to Professor Harbans Singh in view of his outstanding work in the field of Sikh history, religion and literature. Mr. Khushwant Singh, the renowned historian and journalist, paid tribute to the professor with the following words: 'A start has been made by the Punjabi University at Patiala to produce *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*. Harbans Singh, Professor of English, who has been a fellow at Harvard, lecturer at Berkeley, Mc-Gill and other well-known universities, is the Editor-in-Chief'.

The Sikh Review
October 1992

ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ ਰਿਲੀਜ਼: ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਕਈ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੁਹਿਰਦ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਨਾਲ *ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਆਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਇਜ਼ਮ* ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਹੁਣ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਭਾਗ ਪਬਲੀਕੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਿਉਰੋ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਪਿਛਲੇ ਦਿਨੀਂ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਪਤੀ ਭਵਨ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਵਿਖੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸਮਾਰੋਹ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਪਤੀ ਡਾ. ਸ਼ੰਕਰ ਦਿਆਲ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਇਨਸਾਈਕੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਰਿਲੀਜ਼ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਹ ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਮਹਾਨ ਕਾਰਜ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਚਾਰ ਜਿਲਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਭਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਭਾਸ਼ਣ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਪਤੀ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਮਹਾਨ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਘਰ-ਘਰ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਘਾਲੀਆਂ ਘਾਲਣਾਵਾਂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਭੁੱਲ ਸਕਦਾ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਸਰਬਸਾਂਝੀਵਾਲਤਾ ਦੇ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਪਤੀ ਨੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਧਾਈ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਮਹਾਨ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਕਾਰਜ ਨੂੰ ਨੇਪਰੇ ਚਾੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਹੈ। ਉਪਰੰਤ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਵਾਈਸ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਡਾ. ਜੋਗਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ 'ਤੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ੈਸਰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸਖ਼ਤ ਘਾਲਣਾ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇੰਨਾ ਮਹਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਮਿਸਾਲ ਕਾਰਜ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਪਤੀ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜ਼ੈਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਆਏ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਰੋਹ ਦੇ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਤਕਨੀਕੀ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ 'ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ-ਵਟਾਂਦਰਾ

ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਸ ਸਮਾਰੋਹ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਅਤੇ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਦੇ ਲਗਪਗ 50 ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤਾਂ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਈਆਂ।

ਕੌਮੀ ਏਕਤਾ ਇੰਟਰਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ
ਜੁਲਾਈ 1993

Encyclopaedia of Sikhism: The second volume of the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism under the editorship of Professor Harbans Singh, has been completed. It comprises 576 pages, and deals with more than one thousand subject titles, covering different aspects of Sikh life and letters, history and culture, philosophy and ethics, customs and rituals. In the quality of writing and analysis this volume compares well with first one. The third volume, 'M' to 'R' is also with the printers and will be published soon.

The Sikh Review
January 1997

Harbans Singh Passes Away: The well-known Sikh scholar, Dr. Harbans Singh, passed away at Patiala on May 30, 1998 at the age of 77. An erudite scholar, he made his debut at the stage of Sikh studies with his book on Maharaja Ranjit Singh as early as 1952. While he authored several other books subsequently, including *The Heritage of Sikhs* in 1964, he will be remembered for all times to come for his four volume *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*. Three volumes of this monumental work have already been published by the Punjabi University, Patiala, while the fourth and the last one is also in the press. The Encyclopaedia is a rich body of knowledge with thousands of entries in Sikh Theology, Philosophy as well as History, contributed by top scholars, and meticulously edited by Dr. Harbans Singh.

Dr. Harbans Singh was a rare example of deep commitment and perfect devotion. His passing away is indeed an irreparable loss, and the void created will take a very long time to fill. His *antim ardas* was performed on the 7th June 1998 at Bahadurgarh near Patiala, in which speaker after speaker paid glowing tributes to the departed soul in the presence of large gathering.

Abstracts of Sikh Studies,
July-September 1998

ਸ਼ੋਕ ਮਤਾ

ਅੰਤ੍ਰਿਗ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੀ ਇਕੱਤਰਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਨਸਾਈਕਲੋਪੀਡੀਆ ਦੇ ਰਚਾਇਤਾ ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਚਲਾਣੇ 'ਤੇ ਗਹਿਰੇ ਦੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਇਜ਼ਹਾਰ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਕ ਮਹਾਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਦੇ ਖੁੱਸ ਜਾਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੇਸ਼ੁਮਾਰ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਲਈ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੁਰਜ਼ੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਾ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੇਵਕਤ ਅਕਾਲ ਚਲਾਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀ ਵਰਗ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਘਾਟਾ ਪਿਆ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਇਕੱਤਰਤਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦੇ ਦਰ 'ਤੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਿਛੜੀ ਆਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਚਰਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਵਾਸ ਬਖ਼ਸ਼ਣ ਅਤੇ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਰ, ਸੰਬੰਧੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਨੇਹੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਣਾ ਮੰਨਣ ਦਾ ਬਲ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ।

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਗਜ਼ਟ
ਅਗਸਤ 1998

PM Releases Encyclopaedia

NEW DELHI, March 5—The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, released four-volume "Encyclopaedia of Sikhism" here today.

Addressing the gathering after releasing the publication published by Punjabi University, Patiala, Mr. Vajpayee said: "The very history of Sikhism is a history of national integration. The encyclopaedia is a mirror to the profound patriotism of the Sikh community."

Stating that Sikhism combines the 'Bhakti' and 'Shakti' traditions in equal measure, he said Sikhism is a young religion but it embodies all the age-old values of India.

Mr. Vajpayee suggested that "this magnificent work be put on Internet, so that the people of the world may refer to it, learn from it, and marvel at the glory of the Sikh faith."

Earlier, the Punjab Chief Minister, Mr. Parkash Singh Badal, said the release of the encyclopaedia on the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of Khalsa Panth "is all the more significant as we are presenting to the scholarly world, a repository of all the basic information about Sikhism."

Mr. Badal said, "The encyclopaedia is, beyond doubt, Punjabi University's outstanding contribution. This will enable the people all over the world to understand Sikhism better."

Paying tributes to the late editor-in-chief of the encyclopaedia, Professor Harbans Singh, the Chief Minister said, "he accomplished the job with the spirit of dedication possessed by the sages."

The Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University, Professor Joginder Singh Puar, said the four volumes have been the outcome of hard work done by academicians and researchers for nearly three decades. The Encyclopaedia, the first of its kind in the field of Sikh studies.

The Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertiliser, Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala, Union Human Resource Development Minister, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, and the Punjab Finance Minister, Capt. Kanwaljit Singh, were also present.

The Tribune
6 March 1999

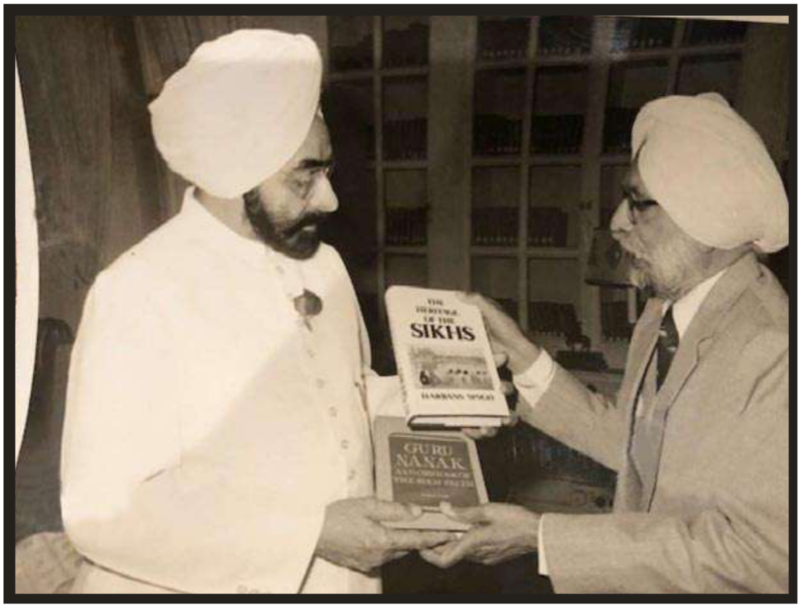
Photographs



Professor Harbans Singh (second from left on the chair) who was President of Muktsar Khalsa Youth League in 1936-37



Professor Harbans Singh in the International Seminar organized by Punjabi University, Patiala on the occasion of 500th Prakash Purab of Guru Nanak Dev Ji in 1969. Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith, USA (centre) was president of the session as Dr. Marcus Braybrooke, UK (right) is presenting his paper



Professor Harbans Singh presenting his books to Giani Zail Singh,
the then President of India



Professor Harbans Singh in a meeting with Giani Zail Singh, the then President of India.
Also seen inthe picture are Sardarni Kailash Kaur (wife)
and Dr. Nikki Guninder Kaur (daughter)



S. Prakash Singh Badal and S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra with
Professor Harbans Singh at his residence in Punjabi University, Patiala



Sri Shankar Dayal Sharma and Giani Zail Singh, former Presidents of India,
releasing the first volume of *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* in 1993



Sardarni Kailash Kaur, the wife of Professor Harbans Singh, receiving honour from Sh. Shankar Dayal Sharma, the then President of India



S. Harcharan Singh Brar, during his tenure as Chief Minister in 1995-96, visiting Professor Harbans Singh at Punjabi University, Patiala



Professor Harbans Singh with his family members
Dr. Harbans Lal is also seen in the picture



Website on Encyclopaedia of Sikhism launched

...une News Service

...igarh, September 24

...e Encyclopaedia of Sikhism will now ... available on Punjabi University's ...site. It will also be available in a com... ...t disc format. The Punjab Governor ...d chancellor of Punjabi University, ... Rodrigues (retd), today launched ...jabi University's website ...ww.advancedcentrepunjabi.org/eos) ...he Encyclopaedia of Sikhism and also ...CD at Punjab Raj Bhavan, here today.

...ontaining reliable information and ...owledge of Sikh religion and culture, ...losophy and history, this ency...paedia can also be accessed on the ...site: www.punjabiuniversity.ac.in ...tp://www.punjabiuniversity.ac.in>.

...ddressing the gathering of educa...nists, academics and intellectuals on ... occasion, General Rodrigues called ...n them to restructure and reorient ...cation system, so as to encourage the ...th to achieve academic brilliance. It ...e collective responsibility to provide ... students the opportunities to devel... qualities of debate and to demonstrate ... ability and determination for the ...lution of new ideas, and achieving ...realisation of their dreams.

...mphasising the need for serious ...spection and to know where we ... gone wrong, General Rodrigues ... "We are a 5000- year-old civilisa-tion with universities like Taxila and Nalanda and we must make serious and sustained efforts to revive those glorious traditions of education." He referred to Lord Maculay's speech in February, 1835 in British Parliament indicating the need to change the system of our education, suiting the needs of British Raj. He said he had already asked the vice-chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, to carry out a study to make our children more complete, with the qualities of head and heart.

S.S. Boparai, vice-chancellor of Punjabi University, Patiala, said this Encyclopaedia of Sikhism was the highest manifestation of society's thought and intellectuals' research work. He said keeping in view the growing demand of authentic literature on Sikh religion and history in English Punjabi University resolved to prepare the Encyclopaedia of Sikh religion and the job was entrusted to Prof Harbans Singh known for his authority on the subject.

Punjab Governor Gen S.F.Rodrigues (retd) launches a website on the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism at Punjab Raj Bhavan in Chandigarh on Monday. On left is vice-chancellor of Punjabi University S.S.Boparai.

Punjab Governor Gen. S.F. Rodrigues (Retd.) launching website on
The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism at Chandigarh, The Tribune 25 September 2007

Brief Bio-Data of Professor Harbans Singh

1921	Born on 6 March at Kotha Guru in present-day Bathinda district of Punjab.
1937	Entered Khalsa College, Amritsar as a First-Year Student.
1941	B.A., with Honours in English.
1942	President of the Khalsa College Students' Association.
1942-43	Editor of the *Darbar.*
1943	M.A. in English Literature.
1943-44	Lecturer in English at Khalsa College Amritsar.
1944	Joined Brijindra College, Faridkot state, as Head of the Department of English.
1958	Appointed Principal, Government College, Muktsar.
1960	Punjab Government nominated Member-Secretary of the Punjabi University Commission.
1962	First Registrar of the Punjabi University.
1964	Visited, on the invitation of the U.S. Government, various major American universities for study and research.
1968-69	Visiting Fellow at Centre for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, USA.
1969	Delivered a public lecture at Harvard University on the occasion of Quinquecentennial of Guru Nanak's birth entitled 'Guru Nanak as Historical Memory and Continuing Reality in the Sikh Tradition'.
1970	Appointed Professor and Head of Sikh Studies in the newly established Department of Religious Studies at Punjabi University, Patiala; Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Religious Studies, and Member of the Syndicate and the Senate.

1970 Attended World Conference on Religion and Peace at Kyoto (Japan) and performed *ardas* (the Sikh prayer service) in English.

1972 Participated in a Conference on Non-violent Transformation of Society at Driebergen (Holland); Relinquished headship of Department of Religious Studies to draw up the blueprint of and start work on the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism.

1977 Turned down the offer of Vice-Chancellorship in favour of his commitment to complete the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism.

1981 Conferred Life Fellowship by the Punjabi University after his retirement from active service.

1982 Visited University of California, Berkeley, and delivered a series of lectures on Sikhism.

1991 Honorary doctorate from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

1992 Honoured by Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Sri Amritsar.

1992 Punjabi Vikas Manch honoured Professor Harbans Singh at his residence in Punjabi University, Patiala. H.K. Manmohan Singh, former Vice-Chancellor, Giani Lal Singh and Principal Satbir Singh were the part of delegation.

1993 The first volume of the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism was released by Sh. Shankar Dayal Sharma, the president of India.

1998 Professor Harbans Singh passed away at the age of 77.

1999 Complete 4 volume set of the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism was released by Sh. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister of India.

Books by Professor Harbans Singh

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